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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

VOL. VII.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

TO

HER DAUGHTER

AND

47673

HER FRIENDS.

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A NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION,

TRANSLATED FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1806.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. WALKER; W. OTRIDGE AND SON; WILKIE AND ROBINSON; WHITE AND COCHRANE; J. CUTHELL; CADELL AND DAVIES; LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN; J. RICHARDSON; BLACK, PARRY, AND KINGSBURY; J. MAWMAN; SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES; GALE AND CURTIS; AND R. BALDWIN.

1811.

47673

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, &c.

[The Letters with an asterisk before the number are new Letters.]

LETTER DCCXXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 13, 1685.

YOU use me ill, if you think I grudged the postage for the book of carousals: never did I pay any thing with greater alacrity; it has proved a feast to us ever since we have had it: I am certain that, if I had been at Paris, I should only have read it superficially; for in that place one occupation continually excludes another; it is like the ocean, where wave succeeds to wave; the comparison is just. Here we are in a lake; we can enjoy the carousal without fatigue; but we have been a little puzzled with respect to the devices. That of a dog who gnaws a bone for want of something better to eat, quite confounds us. We shall certainly be the occasion of your reading this book. I am highly delighted with the race, in which M. de Luxembourg's two hams were the prize. The abbé could not contain himself when we came to this place, and wished he had

been one of the Paladins. Was the duke de Bourbon looking very handsome? Tell me seriously what sort of figure he made; did he in shape and air at all resemble our marquis*? Ah! I fear not. I am quite concerned for him; it is a terrible mortification, amidst so much greatness and splendor, to be deficient in shape. I hear his wedding is to be celebrated with great magnificence, and that the most noble of the chevaliers are to be present. I shall tell madame de la Fayette what you say of hers: she will be delighted. She complains affectionately that she scarcely ever sees you. She says you appear every where as handsome as an angel and always the same; I never mention again a syllable of what you tell me, except to yourself, so that there is no danger of its coming round. Madame de la Troche informs me, that madame de Moreuil was taken by the dauphiness into her carriage on Wednesday last, and that this is thought an earnest of her being appointed lady of honour to the duchess de Bourbon, because the king said he would have the person appointed to that post to accompany her in the carriage without any one else; but I think there was no occasion for so much hurry. I wish she may have the appointment; you know I gave her my vote from the beginning.

My vapours seemed inclined to pay me a visit the other day, and I took eight drops of essence of urine; but, contrary to custom, it prevented me from sleeping the whole night; it produced, however, the intended effect, and my esteem is greater than ever. But I should be

* All this is irony. The duke de Bourbon was very diminutive and very ugly, but he had a great deal of wit: mademoiselle de Nantes, whom he married, was perfectly amiable and graceful, though a little lame.

grateful to complain of the vapours, for they never once attacked me during the disease in my leg; indeed, it would have been very ungenerous of them to have taken that advantage. Speaking of my leg, I will inform you how matters stand with it: for some time there was no wound to be perceived, but the place was so hard, and so many humours were settled round it, that the good fathers thought it necessary to disperse them slowly, by poultices of certain herbs, which were removed twice a day, and then buried, and by degrees as they rotted,—you may laugh if you please,—the pores opened and the part became supple, till, by a mild and almost insensible perspiration, this leg, which had been so imperfectly healed before, is absolutely well. I hope you will tell all this to the surgeons, who, I suppose, will laugh heartily too; but I do not care for that.

Do you wish to know where I was yesterday? I was at the *Place Madame*, where I took two or three turns at mall with the players. Ah, my dear count! I always think of you, and how gracefully you strike the ball! I wish you had as fine a place for this amusement at Grignan, as we have here. I intend presently to pay a visit to Pilois: he is making a delightful green slope, in our long walk, from the end of it towards the road. I hope, my dear child, after this, you will not accuse me of being reserved, of concealing the truth from you, or neglecting to inform you of any circumstance.

Our capuchins are faithful to their three vows: their journey into Egypt, where they saw so many women like Eve, has disgusted them for the rest of their days. In short, their greatest enemies can find no fault with their conduct; and this, hated as they are, is passing a

high encomium upon them: they have restored a woman to life who was considered as dead.

A word or two of the duke de Chaulnes: he informs me, that the states are at Dinan, and that he purposes to open the assembly on the first of August, that he may have time to come and take me away from hence about the beginning of September: and then he adds a thousand drolleries about you: "that he has at length brought you to the point he desired; that you begin to coquet with him, and that in a short time he expects————." In short, he delights me highly with his raillery; and, to say the truth, I have a great regard both for him and the duchess, who, in her letters, tells me a hundred little secrets. I cannot conceive how they can be hated, envied, and tormented, as they are. I am very glad, however, that you are insensibly become friendly towards them. Had the states been at Brieux, it would have been dreadfully mortifying. It remains now to see who will be appointed commissary; this will be another disagreeable circumstance to them: if you are upon terms of confidence with them, they have a great many things to tell you: nothing can equal the trouble they have experienced for some time past.

Observe, my dear child, what fashions prevail among the gentlemen this summer; I shall desire you to send me something handsome for your brother, who wants a suit to receive our governor in; he wishes it to be smartly made, with cuffs as they are worn, and suitable trimmings. At the same time I wish you would consult the duchess de Chaulnes about a summer dress for myself to appear in at Rennes; for, as to the states, I shall beg to be excused from waiting on them. From Rennes I shall return hither, to prepare for the high

festival of seeing and embracing you again: Madame de Chaulnes will readily agree to this. I have a dress of brown taffety trimmed round the cuffs and the bottom with silver fringe; but this, I fancy, is now out of fashion, and I do not wish to appear singular or ridiculous, at such a magnificent place as Rennes. I should like to be dressed according to your taste; but do not lose sight of economy, nor the gravity which becomes my age: you will be the best judge when these things will be wanted, as you will know the time when the duke and duchess set out; and you may be sure I shall be among the foremost to welcome them to Rennes. I really blush at the ingratitude they have met with from the people of this country, whom I should be sorry, in this respect, to resemble.

We hear—this is very much to the purpose you will say—that the minims * of your province have dedicated a treatise to the king, in which they compare him to God, but in such a way as to make God hold only the second place. This curious piece was showed to the bishop of Meaux, who spoke of it to the king, telling his majesty that it ought not to be allowed; upon which the king, who was of the same opinion, ordered it to be sent to the Sorbonne for their revisal; and the Sorbonne have decreed that it should be suppressed: *too much is too much.* I could never have suspected the minims of running into such blameable extremes. I love to send you news of Paris and Versailles! you know nothing!

You seem to have a romantic regard for the princes de Conti †; for my part, I cannot help blaming them

* An order of friars.

† The princes de Conti and Roche-sur-Yon were gone to serve in the wars in Hungary, where they were present at the battle of Gran, and performed prodigies of valour.

for quitting such a father-in-law, and not trusting to him to show them enough of war. God knows, they would not have wanted opportunities in the station they are in; no one doubted their courage, and what need had they, therefore, to set up for adventurers and knights-errant? Their cousins of Condé did not want opportunities of signalizing themselves, nor would they. However, *con questo*, (with this), I conclude, my dear child, devouring in imagination the month of September, which is not far off.

LETTER DCCXXX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, June 17, 1695.

How glad I am that you are at Livri, and that your mind is disengaged from all the bustle of Paris! You say a thousand kind things of your affectionate remembrance of the good abbé and your poor mamma. I sometimes wonder where you find the only proper words for expressing your sentiments on every occasion; but it is in your own heart, which can never fail you; though you sometimes commend wit, which would counterfeit the language of the heart, it is at best but a poor impostor, it is at a loss, it betrays itself, it stumbles every instant, its gait is not uniform, and those who know the heart are not to be deceived by such mimicry. Let us then cherish, my dear child, whatever proceeds from so pure a source.

You charm me by recalling to my mind all the pleasures of Livri; you and Livri are indeed too much, and I should not be able to resist the impatient desire of returning to you there, if I did not expect that the month of September would procure me that blessing: perhaps

I will not return sooner; you well know what Paris and the business and difficulties which prevent when you are there, from leaving it. In short, my [illegible] is disposed to hope that I shall see you there: but [illegible] do you tell me, my dear child? you make my heart beat. Is it to depend only on the resolution of mademoiselle de Grignan not to declare herself till the month of September, that you determine to wait for me till then? Alas, then, you deceive me! and it might have been possible that, if I had returned to Paris in two months, I should not have found you there! this thought distracts me, and seems to savour of dissimulation; haste then to satisfy me on this point, for though I am certain that such an event cannot now happen, yet I long to hear it from yourself. Oh *saint Grignan!* how much I am obliged to you, if it is to you I owe this happy certainty!

But to return to Livri: you are my own daughter, you are fascinated with the place; may the charm continue to operate till the end of the year! You are very facetious on that smile of the prior, and exaltation of the head, which bespeaks approbation! But how can you talk of hearing nightingales on the thirteenth of June? They are now taken up with the care of their young; they no longer think of singing or making love; more weighty cares occupy their little breasts. I have not heard a single one here; they are all in the meadows by the ponds; but that is a great way out of my beat, and I think myself happy to be able to traverse our beautiful walks, which are as smooth as a bowling-green.

The princess was here yesterday, who gave us an account of the carousal*: I thought we had been a little

* This superb carousal was given at Versailles before the marriage of the princess. But this sort of entertainment has long been abolished in

extravagant in our encomiums; but, considering the place we are in, we may be excused for amusing ourselves with trifles. We know that in Paris those things are only the wonder of a day: but we are not in Paris, therefore I am sure you will not be too severe upon us for our folly. I forbid you from talking of your youth as a thing that is passed; leave this discourse to me; for, when it comes from you, it pushes me a little too forward in life, and puts strange things into my head. Pray do not take the trouble of going to Paris to execute the commissions I gave you in my last for my son and me; it will be sufficient if you send patterns: write to d'Escars, she will do that business for you, so give yourself no trouble, but enjoy your charming situation in peace and tranquillity. We have just such a moon here as you have at Livri, and we have not been deficient in paying our respects to it. The *Place Madame* is a charming spot! It is like a large *Belvedere*, from whence you have a prospect of the country for ten or twelve miles, terminating with a large wood, belonging to M. de la Tremouille; but the moon has a finer effect among the high trees in your abbey. I am looking at it now, and I fancy you are employed in the same way: it is an odd place, you will say, for a rendezvous! Baville will be a much better one: what say you, my dear? My son and his wife both love and respect you.

all courts. The present king of Sweden, however, gave a carousal at Drottingholm, a few years ago, which, from the accounts that have been stated by those who were eye-witnesses of it, bore little resemblance to those of Lewis XIV.

LETTER DCCXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, June 20, 1685.

How glad I am, my dear child, that you enjoy yourself so well at the little abbey! the good abbé is quite delighted; he says, that you know better how to manage matters there than we did: I really think so too; but the poor folks at Daville are disconsolate at not having you with them. Coulanges writes me word how much M. de Lamoignon regrets your absence, and puts me in mind of September, and the circumstance of finding you there. I look forward to the approaching period with greater pléasure than ever, whatever it may cost me; but as it is an expense I am obliged to incur, it is better that it should lead to something agreeable, than to pass the days in solitude and without hope, as is at present the case.

You amuse yourself very prettily; it is certainly right, as you say, to observe some kind of rule, though without making a vow. It is rule which prevents the despair of those who are devoted to a retired life, and makes the time lighter to those who are not. It is rule that teaches us what we have to do, and fills up our time: yours indeed has no void; for, with such good company, your hours at Livri must pass agreeably; for that reason I would not have you quit it for the sake of executing our commissions. I am delighted to see Corbinelli there with the Polignacs; it is a connexion that seems to presage no sudden rupture, and perhaps the flame may increase by having been a little interrupted.

We have laughed very heartily at your short and smart replies to my son's questions: we are not so mo-

dest as you imagine; we perceived there was some hidden meaning in two of them especially; but modesty indeed would not permit us to demand an explanation. I enter fully into the disputes and conversations of Corbinelli; but you should, out of friendship, prevent him from scandalizing weak minds: I am not sure that he might not be accused of attempting to set up a new system of divinity. Your account of the poor chevalier makes me weep: what, the use of his limbs entirely gone, and obliged to be carried every where! It is a melancholy thing! My heart bleeds for him. Besides, it is an age since he was at Versailles, which is lamentable for many reasons. Tell him how truly I sympathise with him in his sufferings. I am not pleased either with that abominable fever continuing so long on M. de Grignan. Would to God our capuchins were near enough to take him in hand. They have lately recovered two women from the brink of the grave, one of whom is in a state of convalescence, and the other perfectly well. But think of the condition in which they found the latter! weakened by twelve bleedings, with no strength remaining but what was given by the last sacraments! They set to work, saying "She shall at least not die before to-morrow," and it is now a month since her recovery. I shall let you know how their other patient goes on, for you must indulge me in my fondness for praising these good fathers. I informed them, the other day, that my leg perspired a good deal; they returned me for answer that they knew it, that it was the point they had aimed at by their remedies; and that I was cured: at the same time they sent me a liquid they called *essence of emeralds*, which is to strengthen the part, and has a most delightful perfume. I should do myself violence to be silent on the subject of these people; they have sent my

daughter-in-law a medicine lately, which they tell her will be the last she will have occasion for, and that she will be well: but as they are not quacks, nor promise miracles, they are by no means ashamed if they are not always successful. As for my vapours, my dear child, I have had no return of them since I mentioned the subject to you; besides, they have no connexion with the disorder in my leg; and if they were to pay me another visit, I should have recourse to the spirit of urine, notwithstanding I did not sleep all night after the last dose; for I am aware there are times when we cannot sleep, without being able to assign a cause for it.

I am delighted to find you are so well; may you long continue in this happy state, and may heaven prosper all your wishes and designs! The good abbé is very angry with madame de Coulanges for depreciating our woods as she does, especially as they are now honoured with your presence. Pray make my compliments to all the good folks at Livri; you are undoubtedly the centre of many places and many hearts, which are linked to you by a kind of sympathy, when you make them happy by your love, or indeed even if you do not love them at all. Was I not right in wishing always to enjoy a blessing, whose foundation is to be found only in your heart? Mine, my dearest child, has long been yours: you have ever been and will ever be its darling object.

LETTER DCCXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 1, 1685.

If the fancy were to take me, to say that I would set out from hence next month, I know of nothing to hinder me; for the four or five days that are generally idled away after the departure, would just complete my reckoning. Thus far, my dear, are we at length got by dint of continually going, continually wishing, and passing the days in dull uniformity, one after another, as it has pleased God to send them; I will, therefore, after your example, indulge myself in the pleasing hope of seeing and embracing you next month. I will believe that God will permit us to taste this joy pure and unalloyed, though nothing in the world could be easier than to find a bitter to dash it with: but were we to look too far into futurity, we should never enjoy a happy moment; and it is a mercy that Providence gives us the power of banishing sometimes the melancholy reflections, which would otherwise be continually tormenting us, either on our own account, or that of our friends; we have, therefore, my dear, nothing to do but to live and be happy.

I enter easily into mademoiselle de Grignan's reasons for not remaining at Gif*; it is certain, that, after having been brought up in the school of St. Augustin†, she would here find heresy in that of Moline's; a change she would by no means relish. I much approve your desire of seeing her at home again, as she must be a

* See Letter, October 8, 1685.

† That is, the Carmelite convent, in the fauxbourg of St. James, at Paris.

blessing and edification to the whole family. Cannot you find an opportunity to assure this charming saint how truly I respect her? I had so long the happiness of living with her, that I would not be entirely forgotten by her. We will one day have a little chat about the different destinies of the two sisters: we ought to leave all to God, as M. d'Angers observes, and acknowledge, in all things, his will and providence; otherwise there would be no living in the world, and nothing would be heard but incessant complaints of second causes.

I send you a scrap I have received very opportunely from Marbeuf, which will put you out of all doubt in regard to my leg. I must confess, that the length of the cure gave me some uneasiness, and that I had written to her that I was afraid the good fathers flattered me; her answer, as you will see, was altogether natural, and shows that they laughed at me for my incredulity; and, to my great joy, I can sincerely say, that it is now upwards of six weeks since there has been the least appearance of a sore. I walk as much as I please; I use the *emerald water*, which is so pleasant, that if I did not apply it to my leg, I should by choice put it upon my handkerchief. I have other things by me that I might apply, if I saw occasion; but I believe I shall take the good fathers' advice, and not pay too much attention to a limb that wants none of my care; I am certain, if I were at Paris, I should forget it. You seem to have drawn M. de Grignan into much the same negligence, by telling him that he is better since he has been at Versailles. Nothing can equal what you say of the manner in which we there forget ourselves; though self, notwithstanding the appearance of being carried away in the vortex of others, is the only thing thought of: but I need only repeat your words, "We

are so concealed and enveloped there, that it is with greatest difficulty we can discover self to be the mo of our actions." I defy eloquence itself to give a bt definition of this situation. Hence, then, it app .. necessary to lose sight of self for a while, and to regard other objects. The capuchins are certainly of this opinion; so much so indeed, that they will not answer trifling questions. They are very sorry M. de Grignan has been bled; they say it is the worst thing that could have been done for him: they would be happy to undertake his cure, were they in his neighbourhood; but at such a distance they do not choose even to give their opinion. They are great observers of times, humours, and physiognomy; if you have any inclination for their service, you must set M. de Chaulnes to work, who has them at his command, as you have him. This is the only way I know of. I have no power myself; but, at any rate, no more bleedings.

It has no bad appearance, that the king took the pains to inquire after your invalids; this is some consolation to poor courtiers, who live only in his smiles. One of the women of whom our capuchins had the care, died lately; but do you know how it happened? Because they could not find out a method to make her a new pair of lungs; it seems half her own were wasted when she first applied to them; indeed they never would promise more than to preserve her life for a short time, and enable her to make a comfortable end; and they have kept their word.

I am really very sorry, my child, that you are obliged to quit Livri; you are now overwhelmed in business again: I fancy you have had but indifferent weather for these three or four days past; it has been very cold here, with chilling rain, quite unlike the gentle showers that usually fall at this season of the year.

You may have seen by my letter, that my son will keep his word with us, and think himself happy to be drest after your taste. I thought his wife would have died with laughing at the list of the colours you say you do not intend to send him, at the same time assuring him it shall be a very handsome trimming: in short, do as you please; we leave the whole to your direction, hoping, however, that you will proceed with economy: "I will marry whoever you please, provided it be mistress Hortensia." As for me, my dear child, do with me as you like; you know better than I do whether I shall want new clothes, and what is proper for me. Coulanges writes we word, that our states are all to be new-clothed on the first of August; but you are on the spot to know all this; it is certain, I shall want nothing new, if the governor does not come to Rennes; for I shall not go to the states, and I am tolerably sure, they will dispense with that compliment, rather than prevent me from keeping my appointment with you.

LETTER DCCXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 8, 1685.

You are too good, my dear countess, to take such infinite pains about our clothes; but really you describe the embarrassment you were under so humourously, that I cannot find in my heart to pity you. You will make me finer than I wished to be; but I must submit, when I consider it is your choice, that I shall be in the fashion, like the duchess de Schomberg and madame de la Fayette; that I shall certainly see madame de Chaulnes in whatever part of the country she may be; and what is still better than all, I shall see you too,

and do you the honours of what you have chosen for me. My son is delighted at the idea of appearing well dressed as M. de Coulanges.

We have shocking weather here; when once it begins to rain in this country, it never ceases. Madame de Chaulnes will have no occasion to be apprehensive of the heat; she seems highly pleased with M. de Fieubet's being appointed commissary; so am I, and I own I do not think it possible to make a better choice; in my opinion our governor seems to have gained his point in every respect this time. Coulanges has written me a whole volume; nothing can be more interesting and curious than what he tells me; he has let us into the true light of many things that will pass in the assembly, and of which we should otherwise have been at a loss to understand the reason; in short, he has showed us the whole game. I suppose he has told you his visions about me; he has done so to many others, and I have answered them*: if you see madame de la Fayette, desire her to have a little chat with you about this matter. Pray inform me of every thing that relates to your own affairs, to the journeys the court is to make, and to M. de Grignan's health; for on all these depends my departure. I only wait for one person in business, and then I am ready to set out. Madame de Chaulnes insists upon my coming back with her; I do not dislike the offer, but then how can I get clear of going to Chaulnes with her? and it would be death to me to delay my return an instant. However, we shall see how all this terminates, and, in the mean time, we shall constantly hear from each other. I should be agreeably surprised, if the waters of Vichi were found

* Though we find nothing positive on this subject, we have a faint idea that it alluded to a project of the friends of madame de Sévigné to place her at court, a project which did not succeed.

to be of service at two or three hundred miles distance from their spring; but I fancy the chevalier is a little doubtful of it, as well as myself: I should be glad to be deceived, and that M. de Grignan were to find himself cured of all his numerous complaints; his feverish habit, in particular, makes me very uneasy: he has not taken the bark yet, I find; pray let me know frequently how he is, and how the chevalier is. La Garde is health itself. Be not uneasy about my leg; the capuchins have conquered me: they wished to excite perspiration in it, and they succeeded; I was sorry for it, because I did not expect it; it is past, and we are good friends. Would to God they could have the management of our dear count! I think of this a thousand times a day.

M. du Plessis (ours) joined with us in laughing heartily at his serge of Nesmes; you have so droll a way of saying things! He did not intend you should know the plainness of his dress; he is terribly ashamed of it, and asks you a thousand pardons. He has a high opinion of you, which I have not lessened by my representations: he is one of our best friends, and was a great comfort to me last winter. We have here, in the room of his sister, a young lady from Sainte Marie, whom you would take to be a professed nun of the Visitation, and yet she is not above sixteen years of age. Her father brought her here in Lent, and left her behind him; she is very pretty, and seems to have an affection for us all; she seems particularly fond of being the staff of the *worthy*'s old age, and the attention she pays him amuses us highly.

Madame de la Fayette informed me some days ago, that madame de Moreuil was appointed lady of honour to the duchess of Bourbon; if it be so, I shall truly rejoice at it. I desire you will not forget to make her my compliments of congratulation at a proper season; sho

is now very comfortably provided her. Has her husband any place in the Condé family? My son has told me wonders of the good bishop of Angers*, who, though upwards of eighty years of age, carried the canopy with the Host on Corpus Christi day, and notwithstanding the procession marched above a mile and a half, he immediately after celebrated high mass. Every one was struck with astonishment at the visibly miraculous manner in which he seemed to be supported, and it may truly be said of him, *forza non à, ma l'animo non manca*, (his body's feeble, but his mind is strong). Tell this to M. de Pomponne: every year he appears a greater prodigy.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I WAS myself witness to this miracle, and had the unspeakable pleasure to receive the benediction and kiss the hand of this holy prelate. It is surprising how fearful all his diocese is of losing him, and of seeing his place filled by some frivolous fellow, who will study only to curry favour with the enemies of this good man, while he thinks only of forgiving those who have distressed his old age with a thousand vexations. I could dwell on this subject, but it is better to return you thanks, my dearest sister, for the pains you have taken about my coat; I must confess I was afraid you would have fixed on something too showy, and I had intended to beg the favour of my princess† to make choice of trimmings for me; as she is fond of pastorals, I should have desired her to send me rose-coloured and white favours, a white vest, and one of the prettiest crooks that could be purchased. Is it possible that ninepins and swinging should have fallen into such disgrace

* Henry Arnauld. † Mademoiselle d'Alerac.

as you say they have? If no one can be found to take my place at the swing, I insist upon it that M. de Polignac maintains the honour of nine-pins: I give no one my vote but him. I am uneasy about M. de Grignan; his fever, lowness of spirits, and loss of flesh, alarm every one who love him, and have heard of the state of his health. You are very much mistaken as to the viper medicines, in saying they are heating and drying; the very contrary is the case, as your sister-in-law experiences every day, and I myself have proved for several years past. It is to the use of vipers that I owe my present excellent health; I do not know myself for the same person I was last year. They temper and purify the blood, and refresh and invigorate, instead of drying and heating; but then they must be taken whole, flesh and bone, and not reduced to powder; for the powder heats, unless it be taken in some cooling vehicle. Desire M. de Boissi to send for ten dozen for you; they must be put up in a box, that has three or four partitions, that they may be more at their ease, with bran or moss in each partition. Take two of them every morning; let their heads be cut off, then skin them, and cut them into pieces, with which stuff a chicken: continue this for a month at least, and if M. de Grignan is not the better for it, blame your brother: leave off that insipid rice-broth, and let the poor man have something to comfort and invigorate him. My mother will soon (too soon, alas, for us) have an opportunity of telling you, how much our thoughts have been employed on this subject: yes, you will soon have the pleasure of seeing and embracing her, and consequently I shall have the mortification of losing her; what adds to the vexation is, that the sitting of the states will put us all into such confusion that I shall not be able to enjoy her company uninterrupted during her short stay

in this country. I can reckon only upon the time that remains between this and the arrival of M. and madame de Chaulnes; for after that she will be in a manner lost to me, though still at the Rocks. I begin therefore already to feel the pangs of parting and absence. Adieu, my lovely little sister; my wife sends you a thousand affectionate remembrances.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I TAKE up the cudgels once more, to assure you that you need be under no concern about my health or my leg; it was better that I should have doubts, than the capuchins; their raillery upon my fears ought to make you perfectly easy. They did not tell me their lotions were intended to cause perspiration; I was surprised and uncomfortable, and they were delighted; it is now over, and I apply nothing to my leg but a piece of lint steeped in the blood of a hunted hare, to strengthen it, and perfect the cure. It is now dry and comfortable; I have asked pardon of the good fathers; we have jested upon the subject, and are very good friends. Adieu, most excellent of daughters, and of wives.

LETTER *DCCXXXIV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY †.

The Rocks, July 22, 1685.

BELIEVE me, my dear cousin, I did not receive the book of our genealogy, which you do me the honour to de-

† Several phrases, which have been read in Letter LIV. on the same subject, are to be met with in this. But it is thus they have both been inserted in Bussy's collection; and it is better to repeat, than to suppress, or alter them.

dicate to me, till about four days ago. I must be perfect, that is, wholly free from vanity, to be insensible to such well-seasoned praise. It is so delicate and so happily turned, that, without great care, it would be impossible not to yield to the delicious feelings it excites, and believe, however exaggerated, that it is not in some degree just. You ought always, my dear cousin, to have been thus blind, for I have constantly loved you, and have never merited your hatred. Let us say no more on the subject: you have made amends for the past, and in so handsome and natural a way, that I am very willing to hold myself your debtor. My daughter could not let the book pass through her hands without giving herself the pleasure of reading it; and she has found such agreeable mention made of herself, that her esteem for you and for our family is no doubt increased by it; permit me, therefore, to redouble my thanks.

To return to our *Mayeuls* and our *Amés*. Indeed, my dear cousin, it is all very fine; these are truths which give us pleasure. It is not with us that these titles are to be found, but in ancient charters and in history. The origin of our family pleases me highly; we cannot trace its source, but the personage who first presents himself to notice, was one of the greatest lords in the country more than five hundred years ago, from whom we descend in regular succession. Few persons can boast so noble a head. The rest is all very pleasing; it is a brief history, which might amuse even those who were not personally interested in it. For my own part, I own, I am charmed with it; and I feel the most lively joy, that you have at least derived from your misfortunes, as you so well express it, the knowledge of what you are. In short, I cannot sufficiently thank you for the pains you have taken, and for which you are repaid by your own hands. I have taken great care of this

book. I believe I shall see my daughter before she returns to Provence, where it appears to me she wishes to spend the winter. Thus our affairs have cruelly disconcerted us. It is the will of Providence that it should be so; of Providence, which is so much master of our actions, that we execute nothing but by its good pleasure; and I endeavour to form as few projects as possible, that I may not be so often deceived; for to reckon without Providence, is to reckon without our host.

The good abbé de Coulanges has a very honourable place in our genealogy: he is perfectly satisfied, and begs me to assure you of his very humble services.

When I am at Paris, Corbinelli and I will write to you. Adieu, my dear cousin, be of good cheer.

LETTER DCCXXXV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, July 22, 1685.

It is certain, that, after having told you twenty times "I am cured," and made use, a little too inconsiderately, of the strongest terms I could think of in confirmation of my assertion, you have reason to laugh at all I have said upon the subject; I should be the first to laugh at it myself, as well as at my infidelity, which always led me to approve the latest applications, and to curse the former ones, if it were not that, at length, at length, at length, as you say of the marriage of M. de Polignac, every thing must have an end, and that from every appearance this happy end has been reserved for the mild remedies of the princess de Tarente, and the skilful woman who comes every day to dress my leg; till this little physician arrived, who named the disorder, and entered upon the proper remedies, I

had used nothing that had not irritated, drawn, and inflamed my leg violently. Do not talk of an erysipelas, which is a mere effort of nature, and which you approve, because it is attended with no danger: this is quite a different thing, all has been accident and violence; my frame is yet neither shattered nor decayed, and it has never appeared to me so strong as in bearing all the ills that have been heaped upon it. You know that I do not pretend to be young, and that I am not so; but I assure you I could still say, as you said to La Mousse, "The machine will want a handle some day or other, but it does not want one yet." I am now therefore in the hands of the princess and her excellent nurse, who makes all her medicines, is approved by the capuchins, cures every body at Vitré, and whom God did not send to my assistance sooner, because he wished me to suffer and to be mortified in the most humiliating way; and I consent, since it is his will: I am persuaded that he will now put an end to this mortification: for a week past my leg has been covered with rose-leaves steeped in new milk, boiled, and renewed, that is, warmed again, three times a day. My leg is now quite a different thing: it is slender, supple; no more watery humours, all the blisters dry and dispersed, and no more contractions; in short, my child, all my imaginations and my hopes are realized; but I believe I have profaned these very words by my illusions: this I must tell you, though I have no new language in which to express myself: *fructibus.* Charlotte is always for making me walk: "Madam," said she the other day, "your ladyship may go to Fougeres on Wednesday, where you may be as snug as any thing in the world, and the next day you may go to Dol, which is not more than six leagues, and then you will see the duchess de Chaulnes, which will divert you.

I think it is time you should leave your chamber which you have kept yourself and me, without see the outside of the door, these ten days." This is precise situation: she has removed the roses, w have done all they were required to do, and applies drying sort of pomatum, desiring me to use a slight bandage for a few days, and to be careful of myself, assuring me that by this means I shall bring you back a leg *à la Sévigné*, which you will like so much better, because, both being thinner, they will approach nearer to perfection: in any case, Charlotte is not more than half a league from hence. This is a great deal too much, my dear child, on one subject; but one of my greatest pleasures is, that in coming to Paris I shall no longer have occasion to talk of myself or my complaints. I had the same failing when I returned there after my rheumatism; but that the subject runs into extremes, is owing to the excess of your affection, which will not be displeased with details: I know you well: with others who have not this delightful foundation, I can be concise enough; and I have not forgotten how necessary it is to talk moderately of self, even in our own defence. Let us change the subject.

So, the good M. de Polignac is arrived: for my part, I have no notion of half-speeches; as mademoiselle de Grignan will not declare herself, why does not mademoiselle d'Alerac?—I will not admit the least part of the abuse you lavish so plentifully on your person and understanding; neither the one nor the other can be clumsy or dull, as you say they are. I have known them too delicate, too brilliant, to be angry even if they were to fall into the common class of persons and understandings. What have I said? *common!* O rash and insolent pen! thou deservest to be split, much more than the one the coadjutor abused so unjustly at Livri.

The word *common* was never made for you, who have nothing common either in mind or body. I reserve that word, therefore, for the rest of the world, who, a very, very few excepted, merit no other.

I acknowledge my weakness; I have taken pleasure in reading the history of our ancient chivalry. If Bussy* had spoken a little less of himself and the heroine his daughter†, the rest being true, it might do very well to throw into a closet without being very proud of it. He treats you very well, but he seems willing to make friends with me by giving me praises that I know I do not merit, any more than I deserve his censures‡. He passes slightly over my son, and has inhumanly left him no better than a guidon to posterity: he might have said something better of his wife, as she is of one of the best families in the province; but, indeed, my son has taken so little care to preserve his friendship, or rather has always affected to treat him so uncivilly, that, after having done him justice in regard to his birth, he might very well have dispensed with any thing more: you have always used him better, and you see how he has returned it.

Madame de la Fayette has sent me an account of the entertainment at Sceaux §, which has highly amused us. How very superb it must have been! what a fund

* See the epistle dedicatory written by M. de Bussy to be prefixed to the above-mentioned history. Letters of Bussy Rabutin, tom. i. p. 47.

† Louisa Francis de Rabutin, marchioness de Coligny.

‡ The count de Bussy not being able to find any essential failings in the conduct of madame de Sévigné, who was his cousin, has in his *Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules* (Amours of the Gauls), charged her with follies and defects which she certainly never possessed.

§ The marquis de Seignelai gave a grand entertainment to the king and court, in the gardens of Sceaux, newly laid out by Le Notre. Racine's poem on the peace, which he called an idyl, but which rather de-

of wit and invention appears in this age! how new, gallant, and varied, is every thing! I do not think it possible for human ingenuity to go much farther. The quarrel between madame d'Heudicourt and madame de Poitiers is very droll: I admire the reply of the latter, "You are a pretty figure, truly, to grace a feast!" Upon my word, she was right; for, in entertainments like these, nothing should be seen that is likely to give disgust: and if a person be not blest with a face fit to appear among others, she ought to make herself a face, or to keep away. I wish you had carried yours thither: it would have had few equals. I have heard something about a chaise drawn by Swiss valets, in which madame de Maintenon was placed by the side of the dauphiness, and afterwards madame de Rochebonne: but not a word of our poor Arpajon*; I hope she is not in disgrace; I should be very sorry for it.

Madame de la Fayette has a return of the pain in her side, by only going out in her carriage to visit a neighbour a few streets off; she weeps, and laments the loss of Valan, who, she says, was her physician, confessor, and friend. But am I not very considerate, to give you the news of Paris? I did not know that La Trousse was encamped on the banks of the Saone. My son is at Rennes; I have sent him the letter intended for him.

served the name of cantata, being quite in the lyric style, was performed there. Nothing could be more splendid than the entertainment of Ser . That of Vaux, which had been so much admired twenty years before, was, it is said, a mere village-feast compared with it. The road from Versailles to Sceaux was illuminated by eight thousand lantrens. The example of these expensive pleasures, like that of immense standing armies, was followed by all the princes of Europe, to the great injury of morals, whatever the advocates of unbounding luxury and mistaken prodigality may say to the contrary.

* Catherine Henrietta d'Harcourt de Beuvron, duchess d'Arpajon, and lady of honour to the dauphiness.

Coulanges has written me something about an excellent dinner he had at your house, at which two ladies of Provence, and M. de Lamoignon, were present. I love to be acquainted with these little merriments when they happen. I shall be delighted to see my good Coulanges and the Chaulnes family; but you may rest assured, if I were not able to go to them, I would not attempt it; for there is nothing in the world I am so careful of as my health, that nothing may prevent my setting out, on the first dawn of the month of September. It depends upon you, my beloved child, to fix the happy day, according to the state of your own affairs at court: I am certain you will remain at Fontainbleau till the king goes to Chambor.

Is our coadjutor likely to be archbishop of Aix? I am told he is. Your brother does not think of leaving his house; his affairs will not permit him to see Paris again for some years: he has taken it into his head to pay all his debts; and as he has no sinking-fund for that purpose, he must take the money by little and little out of his income; and this, you know, will not be so speedily accomplished. For my part, I cannot hope to get clear of all mine; but I am daily expecting a person who owes me 11,000 francs, that I have not yet been able to secure: but nothing shall prevent my being punctual to the time I promised, being no less impatient than yourself to see the end of this long and melancholy absence. I must, however, do justice to the air of the Rocks, which is good, from the house being situated neither too high nor too low, nor too near the sea: it is not Britany, it is Anjou or Maine, two leagues hence. I should soon have been cured, if God had seen fit that I should have been properly treated.

I cannot wish success to the duke of Monmouth; his

rebellion displeases me: may thus perish every traitor to his king *!

LETTER DCCXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, August 1, 1685.

I RETURNED last night, my dear child, from my great journey; I took my leave of our governor (the duke de Chaulnes) and his family at six o'clock on Monday morning, telling them, I hoped they would excuse me if *I left them before I saw them hanged* †. I must confess, I was very much pleased to be able to take this journey out of respect to them. I owed them this proof of friendship, in return for the many favours I have received at their hands. M. de Fieubet arrived the evening before, and we enjoyed all the satisfaction which old friends enjoy in meeting together in foreign countries. I thought myself in one of Atlante's enchanted palaces‡ while at Dol; for all the names I was so well acquainted with moved round me without my seeing them; the first president M. de la Tremouille, M. de Lavardin, M. de Harouïs, M. de Charôst, and others, flitted at a

* The duke of Monmouth was beheaded on the 25th July 1685, three days after the date of this letter.

† That is to say, before their departure from Dol, whence they were to set out that very day; but as they had but six leagues to go, and madame de Sévigné had ten, she left it early on Monday morning, to avoid sleeping on the road, or remaining all the day at Dol without company, which she must have done if she had put off her departure till the next morning, Tuesday.

‡ Ariosto supposes the palace of the magician Atlante, in which Roger and many christian knights were detained, to be inaccessible and even invisible.

distance, but we could not touch them. I left it on Monday morning; my good Coulanges would return with me, to pass a week at the Rocks, and my son would needs make the third; so we are all here snug together till the eighth of this month at least: my son and Coulanges then return to pass the last fortnight of the states; and afterwards my son, who entreats me on his knees to wait for him, comes here again to take leave of me; I shall then instantly set off, and hope to be at Baville on the ninth or tenth of September, without fail. I feel the approach of this happiness. We have now done, as you say, with the suppositions and calculations that our affection dictated to us some time ago; our motions are now regulated like those of other mortals, by the common calendar. I have had neither the pain, the fever, nor the evil you fancy; you will not find me the least changed, tell my little Coulanges if I am; he will tell you I am not the same: my leg is very well after my journey, and has not been the least inflamed or fatigued by it. We exhaust Coulanges, he tells us a thousand ridiculous stories; he made us laugh to tears the other day about the madame d'Arb*** of which you are the very model. I fancy your entertainment at Sceaux was a little damped by the disappointment you met with. I cannot conceive what M. de Montausier and his daughter† mean by their objections to signing the marriage-deeds; this obstinate aversion is really extraordinary.

Are you not surprised at the death of Rarai, who was health personified? I cannot help thinking she fell a victim to the vexation of continually hearing her sister praised, and getting only a side-glance, or a word now and then, for herself, and that as it were from charity.

† Marie Julie de Sainte Maure, duchess d'Uzez.

I took Rennes in my way back, in order to call upon the friendly Marbeuf; as I did Vitré, to pay my respects to the princess; so that I can now enjoy the society of my little Coulanges without interruption.

I am really very much concerned at the poor chevalier's situation: good heavens! with so much youth and vivacity, not to be able to use his limbs, and obliged to be carried about like a gouty old man of seventy! But I consider from whence these afflictions are sent, and bow my head in humble submission. Adieu, my beloved child! we will some day have a little chat about the duke de Luines*; what nonsense did madame de Chaulnes talk of him one day when I was present! If madame de la Fayette had chosen, she could have showed you a letter of mine in answer to this subject, in which I gave her good reasons for continuing as I am†: both she and madame de Lavardin approved them, and perhaps they might have done me some credit with you, whose *esteem* is infinitely *esteemed* by me.

FROM M. DE COULANGES.

I HAVE seen the time when I used to write a line or two to your good mother in your letters, and I now write to you in hers; for I have taken up my rest in these mansions, under the shadow of her wing. She has acquainted you with her journey from Dol, which was extremely agreeable, except that she was overturned twice, and I with her, into a pond; but, as I am an

* Louis Charles d'Albert, who, after burying his second wife, Anna de Rohan, who died in October 1684, was married again on the 25th July 1685, to Margaret d'Aligre, relict of Charles Bonaventure marquis de Manneville, who died in March 1684.

† Madame de Sévigné was left a widow at the age of twenty-five; and it was her own choice that she continued single, for many very advantageous offers had been made her at different times.

admirable swimmer, I got her out again without any accident, or even her being wet. It is delightfully pleasant in these gardens; I shall not leave a spot of them untrodden; yet I must confess it will be a little vexatious, after having heartily tired myself, not to meet with the same fare as I have been accustomed to at M. de Seignelai's. You have been at Sceaux: I am sure you cannot have been pleased with the company you found there.

Adieu, my lovely countess, permit me to kiss your hands, and accept a thousand compliments and good wishes for the whole covey of the Grignans.

LETTER DCCXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Monday, August 8, 1685.

If you could contrive that the first of September should not fall on a Saturday, or that the *worthy* should not have learned of his forefathers to prefer Monday in order to avoid beginning a journey on a Sunday, I should be punctual to my assignation; but this same Monday-rule, which is much of a piece with the thigh of a woodcock and the breast of a partridge, will make us two days later. I dare not indulge in all the delight I feel at the prospect of seeing and embracing you; I endeavour to conceal it from myself, not to give fortune an inclination to disappoint me. I need not tell you what I mean by fortune: let us be modest, and not boast too much of our present prosperity.

We have all been surprised at the news you sent us; the princess de Tarente knew nothing of it; she received the first account of it yesterday from us, with all the phlegm of a true German. We imagine that

the exiles will have more company: but what grief, what madness, must cardinal de Bouillon feel in being involved with these rash boys*! We are of opinion that the court is in some degree concerned in it, and that these were not the only follies and impertinences found in the letters. I do not think this news will reach Paris so quickly: it might even be hushed up at Versailles; but it affects too many people, not to occasion a general uneasiness. I cannot conceive how people can be so mad and foolish, in so prudent a court, and under such a master. Coulanges is here still with my son; they will not set out till Monday next, and purpose staying only a week with the states, when my son is to return and take his leave of me. Every thing is ready for my journey.

* This refers to the princes of Conti, and to what happened to them during their campaign in Hungary, and occasioned them to be exiled on their return. "The king, being desirous to know what induced them to be continually sending couriers, has detained one of them: their letters have all been seized, and several of them are full of the abominable vice which prevails at present, of impiety, and of sentiments for the king very different from what they ought to entertain for him." It was thus madame de Maintenon related it in a letter to her brother. Several other young persons were implicated, as madame de Sévigné conjectured. The son of M. de la Rochefoucault was one of the number. The son of M. de Villeroi was also exiled; not for slander, but for jests in contempt of religion: on which his grandfather, the old marshal, said, "At least my son has only spoken of God: God forgives, but men never do."

With respect to cardinal de Bouillon, his disgrace had no connexion with the young gentry. Restless and ambitious, he was extremely importunate. Proud and violent, he betrayed his ill-humour. He went to the king at an unfavourable moment: the answer was a lettre de cachet. A few years after, he completed his ruin, by taking refuge with prince Eugene, and other enemies of the king, by whom he was despised: this is the fate of a vain discontent, and a powerless rebellion.

FROM M. DE COULANGES.

I AM still here; there is no quitting the *mother-beauty*. We walk without end or measure, and her leg sets us at defiance, and grows daily more plump and handsome. Your brother is very warm at play, and often reminds us of M. de Grignan, who, having the respect that is due to him, does not come a whit behind his brother-in-law in petulance. We had the good princess de Tarente here yesterday, who has much less state about her than the president's lady of ****, and is much less jealous of her rank than she is: for the latter cried like a child, because the first president of the chamber of accounts would have an arm-chair, as well as her husband. I have just been writing to all the wives of second presidents in Paris, to let them know that they are ignorant of their proper rank, and that they must come here to learn it.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I must correct that curious paragraph, where, to praise my leg, he assures you of its plumpness: let me tell you, that it is very finely shaped, and exactly resembles its companion. We walk all the morning, and a great part of the afternoon besides, without my leg being the least offended at it; if I said a word less than the truth, Coulanges would tell you, for nothing can remain a secret with him. After all, he is so lively, so amusing, and has such a fertile imagination, that I do not wonder he is the darling of every one who has the least taste for mirth: if you were to hear him ridicule the follies of our states, and the vanity of the president's lady of ****, whom you know, and who is indeed an original, you would die with laughing. I have seen your foolish Provençale, her accusation is very bold; you will inform me of the result.

The *worthy* returns you all your affectionate remembrances; and your poor brother, who has not been very well these two or three days, embraces you, and requests you to pity him, as he says the country in which I leave him has nothing in it to comfort him for my absence, like that in which I left you. He is quite right, my child; and I therefore set the greater value on that affectionate grief, which all the gaieties of Paris and Versailles could not conquer, though they are excellent places for banishing gloomy thoughts: but your affection is so solid, that no part of it can evaporate. You see, my love, I have not forgotten any of the numerous reasons I have to love you all my life dearer than any other person in the world: and yet, methinks, this is not saying enough.

LETTER *DCCXXXVIII.

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, August 10, 1685.

The present of so noble a work as your genealogy, is really, sir, a very strong mark of gratitude, and very much above my deserts as to your daughter. I knew your house in the aggregate, but I love to make myself acquainted with every worthy individual of your race. You have suppressed your own panegyric †, in the fear of eclipsing Mayeul and his posterity. This courtesy to them would be very laudable, if we did not lose too much by it. I am delighted with the epistle dedicatory, and with my mother's portrait: I recognised her perfectly. I could very much wish to answer to your de-

† As madame de Sévigné has remarked elsewhere to her daughter that he praised himself a great deal too much, this can only be taken for a well disguised stroke of irony.

scription of myself; but I will desire nothing further, since you have done me a favour, and since by means of your friendship I hold so charming a place among the persons you immortalise. This, sir, is truly what may be called an obligation, for which you will also receive the thanks of my mother. I wish I could prove to you in a better way how sensibly I feel the honour you have done me.

LETTER DCCXXXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, August 12, 1685.

Your account of the gold which was heaped up at the end of the table*, made me sweat at every pore. Heavens! how I felt your confusion in seeing such persons take up what you had thrown down! The duke seemed to show a very kind concern in what he said to you, not to throw down all; the concern every one felt for you, would have made them all say the same; for, if you had gone on, it might have been his turn next to have picked up. Nothing could be more friendly than the conduct of the duchess d'Arpajon †: you were marked down in the list by the king's own hand; you were arm in arm with madame de Louvois; you supped with the first company; after all this, it was necessary that you should have a little reverse; but, indeed, except at the instant, it was a thing of no consequence, and I do not see that it can go any farther. Coulanges is so eager to see your letters, that I have not thought it right to conceal from him what passed before the eyes of nations. He says, that, if he were at Paris, he would

* At the king's card-table, at Marli.

† Lady of honour to the dauphiness.

soon inform you what was said of it; he is of my opinion, that it is hardly possible such a trifling incident can have made any noise, or do your affairs any injury. You will let me know some day how things pass at these entertainments, and what story madame de Thianges * had destined for the amusement of the company; for she has a great choice.

You describe the princess de Conti to me as supernatural; I know one person who is a better judge than yourself; and perhaps I do more honour to your judgement than I ought, since you make her pass, in my imagination, for something superior to the late Madamé, and even to yourself: but, in dancing, you must excuse me, for nothing can exceed that graceful form which was always the object of surprise and admiration;

Faisant voir à la cour,
Que du Maître des dieux elle a reçu le jour:

(showing to the court, that she received her birth from the Sovereign of the gods).

We have heard that the duke and duchess de Bouillon are at Evreux, and that the cardinal has been sent to for the keys of his apartments at Versailles; all this is very disagreeable: but he has enjoyed such a long course of happiness and prosperity, that he stood in need of some reverse, to teach him, that life has its bitters as well as its sweets. For my part, if I did not tremble

* "Madame de Thianges, though vain of her own person and birth, and slandering and sneering with respect to others, had, however, some wit, a great flow of words, and nothing really vicious in her heart. She was more than ten years older than madame de Montespan. Her beauty consisted in a fair complexion, rather fine eyes, and an aquiline nose falling into vermilion lips, which made M. de Vendôme say that she resembled a parrot eating a cherry."

It is thus she is described by madame de Caylus in her *Souvenirs*; she adds that madame de Thianges was an epicure; but it is singular that she is silent on her talent for relating good stories, which madame de Sévigné here allows her.

beneath the hand of Providence, I could unfurl every sail to the joy of seeing you so soon: we have no longer years and months to reckon; they are now weeks only, and will shortly be reduced to days. My son has a little disorder flying about him, for which he takes the capuchin's tisanes that did me so much good; however, he intends to set out the day after to-morrow with Coulanges, as they must both be at the breaking-up of the states. Coulanges is still as agreeable as ever; we shall want his company at Baville, if any thing can be wanting there. Adieu, my dear! I embrace you affectionately.

FROM M. DE COULANGES.

If I were to follow my inclination, I should leave the states to themselves, and remain where I am; however, as I imagine they are now breaking up, I must go, because I intend to return by the way I came. Very pretty, madam! I find you made a fine figure at Marli, with all the gold scattered upon the ground! I am certain I should have heard of this affair had I been at Versailles, and they would have told me that you were so transported to see yourself in such a place, that you did not know what you did. But, my dear countess, let the babblers talk their fill, and do as you have always done; nothing but envy and malice can say any thing to your prejudice; you know it is an unpardonable crime in a court for any woman to have more wit and beauty than the rest. The king, I am persuaded, will not have the less esteem for you on account of this accident; nor will he be less ready to grant you the survivorship for your son, that you are so desirous of obtaining, because you happened to throw a few pieces of gold upon the floor. Adieu, lovely countess; you will very soon have the pleasure of embracing your darling little mama, whom

you will find as healthy and as handsome as ever: she will set out to-morrow three weeks, at farthest, for Paris. I have spent a most delightful fortnight here. It is impossible sufficiently to praise the gardens of the Rocks; they would have their beauty even at Versailles, which is saying every thing.

LETTER DCCXI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, August 11, 1665.

You see, my dear, that we are now come to reckon by days only, not by months! not even by weeks!—But, alas! what you say is very true; there could not be more cruel damp to my pleasure than the thought, that we might be obliged to part again almost as soon as we met: this is a painful idea; it occurs to me but too often; day or night I am not free from it: it came in my head the last time I was writing to you, and I could not forbear saying to myself, Surely this evil ought to be sufficient to secure me from the danger of experiencing a greater; but I dare not dwell upon this melancholy reflection, and shall now divert it by the thought, that I am soon to see you at Baville. I shall not be at all ashamed of my equipage; my children have very elegant ones, and I have had the same: but now the times are altered; I have only two horses of my own, and shall hire four others from the postmaster of Mans; and in that manner I shall make my entrance into Paris without the least concern. You will find my leg in a state of perfection, which will make you love Charlotte all your life; she has fancied you from hence more beautiful than the day, and this idea has given her an extreme desire to restore this leg to you, worthy of your

admiration, when you know from what a situation it has been extricated. All this is past, and so is the visit of little Coulanges: he set out on Monday morning with your brother. I accompanied them as far as the gate that leads to Vitré: there we stopt to wait the arrival of your letters from Paris, which came as expected, and were read with the usual pleasure. As you only mentioned, that M. d'Ormesson's wife was at the point of death, I have not dared to write to him; but as soon as you let me know she is buried, I will venture to send him a line or two by way of condolence and comfort; but indeed, considering the state she was in, what could be more desirable for herself and her family than her death? Ah, my dear child, how humiliating it is to be obliged to drag about the lees of life and understanding! how much preferable would it be, could we have our wish, to leave behind us a remembrance worthy of being preserved, rather than spoil and disfigure it by the infirmities and weakness of old age! I should like to be an inhabitant of that country where they kill their parents out of kindness, when they become old and helpless, if such a practice could be reconciled to Christianity.

Our gentlemen sung *guadeamus* on Monday evening at Marbeuf's. Your brother is not quite recovered of his slight disorder. I have had some delightful conversations with Coulanges on the subject he is so much at a loss to comprehend; scenes have passed between us not inferior to some of Moliere's. When do you expect *Saint Grignan?*

LETTER DCCXLI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, August 26, 1685.

WHAT think you of the date of this letter, my dear? is not my 26th better than your 22d? You will find all the rest will go on as well if it please God, for that is every thing. Let me know precisely the day you intend to set out for Bavillé, that I may contrive to be there the next morning: do not make your journey too long, travel at your ease, and let me arrive before you. If you were to doubt in the slightest degree the joy I feel, I should doubt yours; let us not therefore do injustice to each other. For my part, I am resolved not to look into futurity, for fear of making myself wretched. I am resolved to be present at the marriage of mademoiselle d'Alerac, in that very room at Livet. This is the only festival wanting to complete the honours of that mansion; I shall be delighted to partake of it.

What is the reason, my love, that you have been so seldom at Versailles of late? It is making yourself too unhappy about a mere trifle. I find you are still pleased with madame d'Arpajon; if we had had the nomination of a lady of honour ourselves, I do not think we could have made a better choice. I love your Grignans for putting themselves a little out of their way on my account: am I not the same *good old body* to them all, as to you?

My son is returned from the assembly with M. de la Trémouille, who is received at Vitré by the princess de Tarente like a German prince. I believe the Rocks will go and dine with Vitré, and Vitré will afterwards come and sup with the Rocks. M. de Chaulnes will

very soon tell you as many things relating to the assembly, as my son has already told me; but I question much whether you will pay so much attention to them as I have done: but, upon the whole, M. de Chaulnes has met with some disagreeable things, which have been at length accommodated. M. d'Harouïs has great reason to be contented with the states, and with all his friends; this ought to set your mind at rest.

I know not what you will do for want of a person to tell you the news of Paris when I am gone; I could send you a great deal to-day, if I were to write all I know; but I choose to reserve it for Baville. I am surprised that Coulanges makes so slight of madame de Louvois's anger; he contends that there is no necessity for his being in haste to justify himself: he will not write, but will wait to speak to her in person; in the mean time, delays confirm suspicion, complaints are made, harsh and disagreeable things are said, and the offending party is viewed in an unfriendly light. Is it not wonderful that so many persons should take delight in loading this good little creature with a thousand things, that perhaps never entered his thoughts? Endeavour, however, to procure him a candid hearing, and let him not be condemned without a fair trial. He is now at Chaulnes, whence he intends to write to you. I say nothing about my leg, because it no longer furnishes me with any thing to say, except that I enjoy the pleasure of being cured, and of walking from morning till night; you shall judge for yourself; you will not be able to help loving Charlotte. In the mean time, however, I embrace you with all my heart, and am going to abandon myself to all the happiness hope can afford me. I find that I begin already to be less anxious about writing; I have more substantial pleasures in view, though indeed your cor-

respondence, next to your society, is the most desirable thing the world can afford me.

We were yesterday at the princess de Tarente's, where we saw her son; he has a very fine figure, but how ugly he is! he is not the only one of his sex whose figure and features are at variance.† My son sends you many affectionate remembrances; he is perfectly cured of the slight fever he had, by the use of barley water. Adieu, my beloved! I kiss both your cheeks; are you still handsome and in good plight? I hope to know it ere long, if God lends me life, as they say here.

[N. B. *No more letters are found from madame de Sévigné to her daughter till towards the end of 1687, both having passed the intermediate time together at Paris.*]

LETTER DCCXLII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, October 5, 1689.

It seems to me as if I were your near neighbour, my dear cousin; and that if I were to speak a little louder than common you could hear my voice. I am returned from Britany. I went straight to Bayille, where M. de Lamoignon assembled my daughter and all the Grignans to meet me. It is long since I have experienced such perfect happiness. If our dear Corbinelli would have been of the party, I should have forgotten Paris; but his turn came two days after, and you may judge of my feelings by the friendship I entertain for him. I was

† Meaning M. de Grignan, who was remarkably well made, but far from being handsome.

satisfied therefore with the house, with the master of it, and with the company. Father Rapin and father Bourdaloue were there. I was delighted to see them in the freedom of the country, where they lose nothing by making themselves known in their respective characters. We talked of you and of my niece de Coligny. I enter into her feelings at being settled comfortably with you, and into the pleasure you must receive on your side. Resume the chain of your agreeable and delightful society, be the mutual comfort of each other's past sorrows, endeavour even to forget them, and be careful of the excellent state of health which rejoices your friends as much as you suppose it would make your enemies tremble, if the fear of God did not restrain you. If it pleases him to enter into the repose of your solitude, it will be indeed happy for you; if not, call in the aid of philosophy and morality, in which your noble and excellent understandings will find consolation and amusement. I pity my poor nephew, your son, for having been ill. It is a strange embarrassment to a young man proud of his health and vigour. I wish he may marry as fortunately as my son. On my arrival, I found the place of grand-master of the artillery vacant by the death of the duke du Lude. This must make his contemporaries tremble. It has been filled by your favoured cousin d'Humières *.

The address you give me to write to my great cousin is useless. I will have no intercourse with him till I devour him to the very bone in my way to Britany.

* Marshal d'Humières was the friend of Louvois, who however only gave him this place, to clip the profits of it, for the minister of the war department. This marshal, who constantly enjoyed the king's favour, passed for a gallant man, though a perfect courtier; brave in war, but better as the second in command than as the chief.

LETTER MDCCXLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Lyri, October 21, 1668.

I AM here, my dear cousin, with my daughter, her son, her daughter-in-law, the good abbé, and the most delightful weather in the world. Nothing is wanting but our friend Corbinelli, to complete our society; but we can never have all we wish: he loves his liberty, and we cannot help loving him notwithstanding this. I shall send this letter to him, that he may write his answer in it. He will inform you, no doubt, of the hour and minute when the chancellor (M. le Tellier†)

† If you read the funeral oration of Le Tellier, by Bossuet, this chancellor was a just and a great man. If you read the Annals of the abbé de St. Pierre, he was an effeminate and dangerous courtier, a skilful calumniator, of whom the countess Dumouset said, on seeing him come out from a private audience with the king: "I think I see a polecat who has just been gorging himself with chickens, and licking his lips, covered with their blood." Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.

There is no doubt that he was very vindictive. Courville, whom he treated well, speaks of his spirit of revenge.

It is well known that in signing the edict of the revocation of that of Nantes, he exclaimed with joy, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It was he and his son Louvois, who, seconded too well by Baville, intendant of Languedoc, influenced Louis XIV. to use violent measures to convert the Hugonots. It must not be forgotten, in the history of men and of courts, that in this, they were actuated by no religious motive. Jealousy against Colbert, who protected the protestants on account of their industry, was their spring of action in this fatal persecution. When Louvois, in the sequel, sent troops to enforce abjurations, it was merely to take upon himself the whole affair, which moderate measures would have placed in the hands of some other minister.

The praises here bestowed by Bussy and his cousin on the edict and its execution, discover the illusion of the public, which the court found

breathed his last. He was at the point of death yesterday. His firmness may serve for an example to all who wish to die as Christians. These happy mixtures are all that can be desired. You know, I presume, that M. de Lamoignon has lost his brother-in-law. I have often heard you say that the succeeding to a great inheritance stifles the feelings of nature: if that be true, this family will have more reason to laugh than to cry. But I have seen tears that appeared to me to be sincere: the cause of them was, that he joined the character of friend to that of brother. I am delighted with the acquaintance of both husband and wife; it is with reason they are beloved, when they are known. I wish you could have joined the party at Baville, which would then indeed have been complete. I dearly love father Rapin; he is a good and an honest man. He was ably supported by father Bourdaloue, whose wit is charming, and his quickness of comprehension delightful. He is going, by the king's command, to preach at Montpelier, and in the provinces, where so many have been converted without knowing why. Father Bourdaloue will inform them, and make good catholics of them. The dragoons have hitherto been excellent missionaries; the preachers that are now sent will render the work complete *. You have, no doubt, seen the edict by which the king revokes that of Nantes. Nothing can be more noble

means to keep alive. But neither in this place, nor in many others, must the high encomiums that are lavished, be taken in the literal sense; they were often a species of oratorical precaution, and passport, for letters which it was well known would be opened.

* See the preceding note. From the manner in which this phrase is turned, it is evident that the *looted and spurred mission* was not congenial to her heart. Though we had not, as suretics for this assertion, the sensibility of her soul, and the excellence of her mind, it would be sufficient that she was a good Jansenist, to know that she detested forced conversions.

than its contents, and no king has ever performed, or ever will perform, a more memorable action.

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I TAKE you for a gentleman, sir, and I have treated you as such in my reply to the letter you did me the honour to write to me, when you sent me your genealogy. If I had been ever so much inclined to slight you, this alone would have prevented me; but indeed, sir, I am very far from any thing of this sort; I love your mind, and esteem your merit as I ought. As to your person, I take so warm an interest in it, that I wish very much to know what regimen you have adopted to make a double chin out of what was formerly useless skin. M. de Grignan has fallen into this inconvenience, and I should be glad for him to become as handsome as you are, by following your prescriptions.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I RESIGNED my pen to my daughter with pleasure. She has told you herself how difficult it would be for her to forget you now, or ever. Adieu, my dear cousin: you are in a happy frame of mind, if, as you say, you expect death without desiring, and without fearing it. What wisdom! and what folly, on the contrary, to torment ourselves, if it be only in regard to Christianity, and the dispositions which are necessary to this last action of our life!

LETTER * DCCXLIV.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, November 14, 1685.

Good heavens, madam, how much I could have wished to have been at Livri, as well as at Daville, when you were there! If I am bearable in Paris, I am excellent in the country, and you are the same. In town we are too dissipated. It is in vain for me to love you, when I am with you in Paris; I am either, in spirit, with those I have just left, or with those I intend to see in the course of the day. Besides, as I am never eager to be witty, a visit is often too short to give me an opportunity of displaying my powers; whereas in the country I have leisure to find, and to exhibit them. Our friend Corbinelli is like me; he will wear well, because he has great resources. He has informed me of the death of the chancellor, whose exit was as happy as his life. Whatever honour death may confer on him, I am not sorry he enjoys it; and I would much rather he should be where he is, than with us. I heard of the death of M. V****†, as soon as it took place, and condoled with our friend upon the event. I well knew his thoughts on the subject, and should have spoken to him without reserve, if I could have conversed alone with him; but I wrote him word, that I took as much interest in his loss, as he himself could take in it. He returned me for answer, without affectation, that though God had seen fit to deprive him of his brother-in-law, he had not left him wholly without consolation; but that he had been more affected at his death than he

† Brother-in-law of M. de Lamoignon.

could have supposed, from the sudden and unexpected manner in which it happened, from the spectacle it had exhibited, and the extreme grief into which it had plunged his whole family.

This is the proper way in which to speak of such an event, and not as madame de **** expressed herself to me, by writing me word, that though M. de Lamoignon would gain millions by this death, he would be inconsolable. I do not retract my assertion, madam, that the succeeding to a great inheritance stifles the feelings of nature, unless the deceased has been our intimate friend. I admire the method the king has taken to ruin the Hugonots; the wars that were formerly waged against them, and the Saint Bartholomews, have multiplied and given vigour to this sect. His majesty has sapped it by degrees, and the edict he has just published, supported by the dragoons and the Bourdaloues, has been their death-stroke.

TO M'DAME DE GRIGNAN.

I CANNOT deny, madam, that you treated me as a gentleman, and that you did me more honour than I deserved in the answer you wrote me; but this did not prevent you from slighting me a little, by sending me no remembrance in the letter your mother wrote to me on her return from Britany. It is true, I am not the only gentleman, nor the only man of family, whom you have treated well. With regard to the interest you take in my person, in wishing to know what regimen I have adopted to acquire two chins out of the useless and unoccupied skin you were formerly acquainted with, and that M. de Grignan, as you say, may fill his by the same remedy, I have to tell you, that I have found means which he could not employ. It is not so

easy for the husbands of handsome women to be fat, as for their friends; and M. de Grignan would think the remedy much worse than the disease. You would be too happy, madam, and so would he, if, loving you as he does, he could have a double chin with you.

Mais on ne rencontre guère
Tant de biens tous à la fois †.

LETTER *DCCXLV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, November 24, 1685.

I HAVE received no letter from you for more than fifteen months; I know not whether our enraged and jealous friend‡ has intercepted any; it is not, however, like him to do so; he would be more inclined to assassinate you with the little sword you once used so pleasantly in the gardens of Rambouillet. We shall never forget your wisdom, nor your folly; and I have spent a year with my son in Britany, where we have often mentioned you with sentiments with which your merit must impress all hearts, that are not unworthy of knowing it. We have been twenty times on the point of writing some nonsense to you; we wished to assure you that the *scarcity of the gratification* did not prevent you from being often in our remembrance, and twenty times has the demon which turns aside good intentions, perverted the course of this. At length, sir, after having been overturned, drowned, and had a wound in my leg, which has not been healed till within these six

† But so many blessings at once are rarely to be met with.

‡ A jest which refers to Corbinelli.

weeks, I left my son, and his wife, who is very pretty, and arrived at Bavilli, at M. de Lamoignon's, on the tenth or twelfth of September, where I found my daughter and all the Grignans, who received me with joy and affection. To complete my happiness, my daughter will not leave me this winter. I have found our dear Corbinelli just as I left him, except a little more philosophical, and dying every day from some cause or other: his freedom excites my envy; in changing his object he would become a saint; he is, however, so kind and charitable to his neighbour, that I really believe the grace of God is concealed under the name of Cartesian. He converts more heretics by his good sense, and by not irritating them by vain disputes, than others by all their controversy. In short, every one now is a missionary, every one thinks he has a mission, and particularly the magistrates and governors of provinces, upheld by the dragoons: this is the greatest and most noble action that has ever been conceived or performed. Like us, you have been surprised with other news. What an event is the death of the prince de Conti! after having experienced all the perils of the Hungarian war, he came here to die of a disorder which he scarcely felt! He was the son of two saints, was naturally prudent, and, by a left-handed train of ideas, played the fool and the debauchee, and died without confession, without having had a single moment either for God or for himself; for he was quite insensible. His lovely widow has deeply bewailed him: she has an annuity of a hundred thousand crowns, and has received from the king so many marks of friendship, and of his natural affection for her, that with such assistance no one can doubt that she will in time be comforted. The prince de la Roche-sur-Yon, who has not the same reasons, is still very much afflicted. You know, and must certainly

approve, the manner in which these places are occupied. But does it not seem, by the way in which I beat the field, as if I intended to omit mentioning your daughter's marriage to you? Appearances are very deceitful; for this is the principal and favourite side on which I have been struck, from the interest I know you take in the affair. I am truly rejoiced at her establishment, which is both respectable and desirable. I know the name of our lover, who is one of the first of the long robe. The late madame de Frene, celebrated for her excellent understanding, said of this species of families, that they were crimson velvet, that is, a beautiful, substantial, and honourable stuff. I rejoice also to know, that they are happy, and that your daughter is satisfied: God grant they may continue so, and that you, sir, may continue to love me a little in spite of distance and absence: you know the regard I have for your merit. I dare not expatiate further, for here comes our dear, furious, jealous friend.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I THOUGHT I had smothered this wicked correspondence, and that the fear of my extravagances would have taken away your desire of making new protestations. I had pleased myself with the idea, that you had neither written nor received letters from each other for ten months, and I calmly enjoyed the charming thought that you had forgotten one another completely. I was delighted to meditate no longer on plans of assassination, or the secrets of the black art, to separate you; and, unfortunately, I see greater reason than ever to have recourse to incantations. I will inform you of all I practise in vain, that your perseverance may reduce me to the fatal necessity of consenting to your union. Your daughter is now in a fair way to make you a

grandfather. I look forward to this title to console myself for the friendship of which I have just spoken to you: it would indeed be excellent, if a grandfather were to fall in love with a grandmother! To return to your daughter: have the goodness to present my compliments to her, and to her mother, with the hope that she will multiply a race which is almost as worthy of my jealousy, to extend from the east to the west. May she soon have a little boy who may inherit from his mother all her lively, excellent, and amiable qualities, and from his father, the merit of an innumerable host of Girards, who are even more honoured here, than they are there! Do you wish for a compliment of condolence on the death of the prince de Conti; it is at your service: do you wish another on my mission to the Hugonots; it is at your service; for it is from your advice I have obtained the inclination to serve my church. All the people of quality here take me for their guide; the vulgar do not accommodate themselves so easily with talents. Adieu, my friend; I am going to my vineyard.

LETTER *DCCXLVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, December 19, 1685.

Our friend Corbinelli and I often talk of you, my dear cousin, but it is always in a tone of melancholy, because what we desire respecting you, does not happen to our liking. I know your son is at Paris; he will have informed you of the excellent choice the king has made of the duke de Beauvilliers to succeed monsieur de

Villeroi*. His merit and virtue are incontestable. He has a fine understanding; and capacity does not depend on the number of years: on the contrary, when we are in the prime of life, our ideas are more lively and clear. In short, every disinterested person is pleased with this choice. You must be more so than any one, since he is the son of your faithful friend, who is at the head of the council, and who will be very deep in the affairs of state. The young Antin † is become a Menin within these few days. Would to heaven that our dear boy was in the same situation! We must look to Providence in all things, for without that we should ill support the afflictions God sees fit to lay upon us. Life is short, my dear cousin: this is the consolation of the wretched, and the grief of the happy and prosperous,

* In the place of president of the council of finances, held by the marshal, who had been governor of Lewis XIV.

"In the council of Lewis XIV. there were men superior in virtue even to the Catos. Such was the duke de Beauvilliers, who concluded the peace of Ryswick, only because the people were unhappy." Thus Voltaire expresses himself, who might have added, that this same man, in the quality of a minister of state, firmly opposed the acceptance of the Spanish succession, though he had, no doubt, foreseen, as well as the chancellor Boucherat, that the king, and even his son, the great dauphin, were disposed to accept the testament, and that his generous opposition would be of no avail. In short, we see this same Beauvilliers at the head of a truly spiritual party, which was formed, at the same time, to lead the king to less violent sentiments and measures towards the protestants.

It is well known that M. de Beauvilliers was governor to the duke of Burgundy, and was the friend of Fenelon. We may venture to believe, that this truly great man was more deserving of academical honours than Montausier. The virtue of the latter was much less active, though it displayed itself more; and perhaps the freedom of his words partook too much of habit and passion, to be really useful.

But a beautiful page of Bruyère's may compensate for an academical eulogium. See the portrait of M. de Beauvilliers, chap. 13, De la Mode.

† Son of madame de Montespan.

though all arrive at the same goal. Pardon these reflections in a person who has just seen mademoiselle de la Trousse expire suddenly at the convent of the Feuillantines. A nun entered her apartment one morning, and saw her leaning back in her chair, as if she had been asleep: she was so in reality, never to awake again. She was quite well the preceding evening. She has been buried as a nun, with ceremonies, and a reputation of piety, which have served me for a lesson, and for subject of meditation, for these three days.

LETTER * DCCXLVII.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

February 20, 1686.

I HAVE never lost sight, sir, of your distinguished merit; that merit which has made me say with authority, that you were the most illustrious of *reprobates*, and the most *reprobate* of the illustrious men of the age. The vulgar will understand nothing by this jargon; but it is sufficient to show you that I have not forgotten you, or rather, that your merit can never be forgotten by one who is so thoroughly acquainted with it. To tell you why I have not written to you occasionally, would be to fatigue you to no purpose; but if any thing can repair the injury I have done myself thereby, it is the assurance, that I have endeavoured not to render myself unworthy of your favour by my studies; that among others, I have cut up Cicero into fragments of the size of M. de la Rochefoucault's maxims, and have converted them into French maxims, in my concise way, without affecting to translate the Latin. I have done

the same, as you know, with the Latin historians †; it seems to me, as if this would furnish the means of paying my court to you, and of proving, that if ever I come to Montpellier, I shall not be less worthy of your esteem than I was before. I could wish to entertain you with the present subjects of conversation; but how do I know whether you like the world sufficiently, to see it displayed in letters? All I can tell you, is, that you would not know it again, and that France now differs more materially from the France of your time, than it does from Spain or Germany.

I request you to tell M. de Courson, that I am very impatient to see him again in our neighbourhood, and assure the *reprobate* that I consider it a great honour to honour him, and to be in his remembrance, and, in a word, that he is as much in mine, as if I had written to him, and received letters from him, by every post. Also, do not forget to tell him, that I spend my life in admiring the letters of Cicero, the familiar ones quite as much as those to Atticus. I flatter myself, that I shall bring madame de Sévigné to like them equally well, and that I shall make him (Cicero I mean) envy her the resemblance she bears to this great orator in the epistolary style.

LETTER * DCCXLVIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, May 14, 1686.

It is true, that I should have been delighted to have lost three pallets of blood from my niece's arm. She very kindly offered it to me; and I am certain, that if

† This work was never published.

a Marie Rabutin had been bled, I should have been greatly relieved. But the folly of the physicians made them persist in bleeding in the right arm one who had the rheumatism in the left: so that, having questioned her on the subject of her health, and her answer and mine having discovered who was the person affected, I was obliged to pay the tribute of my infirmity, and of my having been the godmother of this lovely creature. Thus, my dear cousin, I could receive no benefit from her good-will. But having formerly felt myself very languid, without knowing why, in consequence of your having been bled one morning, I am convinced, that if families wished to understand one another, the least difficult to bleed would save the life of the rest, and me, for instance, from the fear of being lamed. Let us, however, leave the blood of the Rabutins in peace, since I am in perfect health. I cannot tell you how much I esteem, and how much I admire, your good and happy constitution. What folly it is, not to copy time, and not to enjoy with gratitude the consolations which God bestows on us, after the afflictions he sometimes causes us to feel! It appears to me truly wise to endure the tempest with resignation, and to enjoy the calm, when it pleases Heaven to restore it to us: this is to follow the order of Providence. Life is too short for us to dwell long upon the same sentiment; we must take time as it comes; I feel myself just in this happy humour, *e me ne pregio* (and pride myself upon it), as the Italians say. Let us enjoy, my dear cousin, this noble blood, which flows so gently and so pleasantly in our veins. All your pleasures, your amusements, your tricks, your letters, and your verses, have given me real joy, and particularly what you write in defence of Benserade and La Fontaine, against this vile

*Factum**. I had before said the same, in a low note, to all who praised this wicked satire. The author seems to me to show clearly, that he neither belongs to the world, nor to the court, and that his taste is pedantry, which we cannot even hope to correct. There are certain things, which, if we do not understand at first, we never understand: hard and unsociable minds cannot enter into the charms and easy style of the ballets of Benserade, and the fables of La Fontaine: this door is shut against them, and so is mine; they are unworthy

* Furetière, accused of having taken advantage of the labours of the academy, who were then compiling their dictionary, to convert them to his own use in his, was expelled from it in 1685, and published the virulent Factum here mentioned, in which he attacked La Fontaine, who had given his vote for this expulsion. The following is a part of the letter the count de Bussy wrote to Furetière, who was his colleague at the academy. It will be seen, that the wits appreciated La Fontaine, but that madame de Sévigné felt the force of his genius still more than the rest.

"You have too much confounded what you call your parties; among others, M. de Benserade and M. de la Fontaine.

"The first is a man of birth, whose songs, madrigals, and ballet verses, all finely and delicately turned, and only understood by men of sense, have given pleasure to the most discerning man, and the greatest king, in the world. With regard to proverbs and double meanings, for which you accuse him, he has never used any but in jest. In short, he is a singular genius, who has employed more wit in his trifles, than many of the most finished poems contain.

"With respect to M. de la Fontaine, he is the most pleasing fabulist France has ever boasted. It is true, there are some passages in his fables, which, skilfully as he has clothed them, are but too apparent: but if he were to render them less intelligible, his work would be complete. The greater part of his prologues, which are of his own invention, are master-pieces of the kind; and respecting those, as well as his fables and tales, posterity will consider him as an original, who, to the simplicity of Marot, has added a thousand times more grace."

Furetière, at another time, did more justice to La Fontaine. For it was he who said, meeting him with Chapelain: "See! an author poor, and a poor author."

ever to understand these sort of beauties, and are condemned to the misfortune of censuring them, and of being censured themselves by every person of understanding. We have met with many such pedants. My first impulse is to be wroth with them, and afterwards to endeavour to instruct them, but I have found it an absolute impossibility. It is an edifice that must be rebuilt; it would be too much trouble to repair it in short, there is nothing to be done but to pray for them; for no human power is capable of enlightening them. These are the sentiments I shall always entertain for a man, who condemns the noble fire and verses of Benserade, and who does not feel the charms of La Fontaine's fables. I do not retract: there is nothing to be done but to pray for such a man, and to wish to have no intercourse with him. I embrace you and your amiable daughter. I beg you both to believe that I shall not cease to love you while we inherit the same blood. My daughter desires me to say a thousand kind things for her. She is still the beautiful Madelonne.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I FORGOT to tell you, sir, that madame de Grignan had read, that is to say, admired, what you wrote to madame de Coligny, for these are inseparable to your readers. I say the same of your letter to Furetière, and I think it would be trifling your praises to undertake to enumerate them. This is the fault the king's panegyrists fall into: their praises become trivial, or, at least, threadbare: it is the same superlatives repeated, ever since he began his reign, and precisely in the same terms: he is the greatest monarch in the world, and a hero surpassing all heroes, past, present, or to come. All this is true, but cannot they vary the expressions? Have not Horace and Virgil praised Augustus without

repeating the same things, the same ideas, and the same terms? It seems to me, as if no one knew how to praise properly, nor to exhibit truth in its real colours. This is a subject we will treat at Chaseu, if I can accomplish my purpose. I wish the makers of panegyrics were forbidden to use the words, *heroic, great, victorious, wise, brave:* and that they would praise by deeds, and not by epithets.

LETTER * DCCXLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, June 29, 1686.

It is true, my dear cousin, that I had some intention, in the spring, to visit Vichi in the autumn, for a rheumatism with which I was afflicted; but as it is gone, I shall be in no haste to take this journey, which is always a plague to me, who have no longer an equipage as I formerly had. It would be a great pleasure to me to have you both with me. Good heavens! what delightful company we should be, and of what evils would you not get cured! The offer and the proposal make me truly grateful for the arrangement you have made. The measure would be complete, if the beautiful countess, and particularly the friendly Corbinelli, would be of the party. But so delightful a plan can never succeed; it does not belong to us to dispose so charmingly of ourselves and of our time in this world. The heat has been insupportable for this month past; and I have no other reason to give you, why I have not answered your last letter. I was like all the rest of the world, in a perpetual crisis, and my pen fell from my hands the moment I attempted to form an idea or a letter. I had however to thank you for the charming letter you wrote to madame de Toulonjon. I have read it over and over

again; for it is impossible to be tired with any of your productions. There is a certain character of delicacy and ease, which makes us exclaim, '*Es de Lope, e° de Lope.*' You will always be amiable, my dear cousin, this is as much as to say, you will always be loved. Preserve your health and your happiness as long as you can: they generally accompany each other, and I hope they always will with you. When I say you, I include also my niece de Coligny; I can never separate you. You are at Chaseu: go and walk on the banks of your pretty little river for my sake; how delighted I should be, if any chance led me to join you! I embrace father, daughter, and grandson. Never let the title of grandfather offend you: we must all come to it in time.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

It is not the heat, sir, which has prevented me from writing to you, but an inviolable engagement to have no correspondence with you, but conjointly with madame de Sévigné. This treaty is advantageous to me, because my letters pass in favour of hers.

Have you heard the news of this country? Have you been told that Love resumes his rights, and has placed himself under the protection of the young court? Have you been told that the fair sex pull caps for the favour of Monseigneur*? that there is nothing but walks,

* For three years the dauphin remained faithful to his wife. They at length quarrelled, and he had mistresses of every class. A waiting-maid of the dauphiness was discharged with child by him. He could with difficulty raise twenty thousand francs, to repair the injury. He had a daughter by Raisin the actress, whom he would never acknowledge. He was violently in love with the countess du Roure. In short, his long attachment to mademoiselle Choin, a very ugly woman, who charmed him by an ample chest and a considerable portion of wit, is notorious. It is supposed that he married her. The dauphin was him-

assignations, love-letters, serenades, and whatever else composed the delight of our good old times? It is a strange period: correct and incorrect, religious and profane, addicted to men and to women; in short, it is a medley of all sorts.

LETTER *DCCL.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Livri, October 20, 1686.

I AM here, sir, at the place you are so well acquainted with. This was one of the strongest reasons which induced me to take you to Livri, for I was extremely desirous that your imagination should know where to have me, when I wrote to you from hence. At present, therefore, you can see me. I have been here five weeks with my daughter, often with my son, my good abbé, mademoiselle de Grignan, the little marquis de Grignan, and, some days, the chevalier. If you knew, sir, what a delightful family-circle we have formed, you would not wonder at the little impatience I display to return to Paris; but we must do as others do at Saint Martin's tide. Our friend has disappointed us; he has been very much indisposed; he fears our evening dews; lodgings are difficult to be obtained; all these reasons keep him at Paris. But you would not recognise him; know, sir, that he wears a wig, like every other man. It is no longer a little head frizzed in a style peculiar to itself: never did you behold such a change; I have

self very fat; the king said he had the good looks of a German prince. The original memoirs of the times represent him as extremely indolent and careless, carrying, however, his submission to his father to such a length, as to curry favour with all the courtiers.

trembled for our friendship: it is no longer the hair to which I have been attached for these thirty years. My secrets, my confidence, my old habits, were all wandering; he was twenty years younger; I knew not where to look for my old friend: at length I am a little reconciled to this fashionable peruke, and I still find out good friend Corbinelli's head underneath it.* If you had been here, we would have enjoyed the performance together, and I think you could not have failed to be as surprised as myself. It was a very different thing from the wardrobe and splendid point M. de Vardes had given him. By the bye, this gentleman, profiting by our friend's study of the law, has made him chief of his council, and placed him at the head of his affairs; he will be a considerable gainer by this step; but, in fact, our friend is excellent, let him be applied to whatever purpose he may. The one who is constantly excluded from your states, warmly excites my pity. There are infelicities attached to him that are insupportable: his misfortunes seem never to have an end, and he has no longer the consolation of having a companion in misery, for he is the only one who has not found some happy moment. You will see M. de Noailles in a very different situation; he is going to fill a noble post. It is said he is ordered to give precedence to none but the king's lieutenants and the bishops; the barons and great lords are not to stand in competition with him. Inform me how this scene goes off, and particularly what concerns your own interest, and the pleasure which the esteem and friendship of so worthy a man affords. Madame de Calvasson has not thought proper to visit madame de Noailles, but she is the only one who has acted thus. I know not what she means; but never was pride so ill-judged, or so ill-received by every body. Do not name me, if you feel an inclination to

talk of this circumstance like the rest. Tell me also how our Carcasonne (the bishop) does. Adieu, sir; most amiable friend in the world, adieu: I cannot tell you with what eagerness this whole family crowd me with remembrances to you: cannot you hear me even at this distance? You would now be satisfied with my daughter's health; its greatest fault was a delicacy, which made us tremble. Good heavens! how frail is every thing in life, and how we mistake our own interests in attaching ourselves to it so firmly as we do! I have sent your letter to our friend: we knew not what had become of you, but, thank God, you were honourably employed: I am truly rejoiced at it.

LETTER *DCCLI.

TO THE SAME.

Livri, October 25, 1686.

I HAVE received your letter, sir: it presented itself to me, as if you wished to make me ashamed of my silence, and to believe I had been ill, for the purpose of entering into conversation with me. It reminds me of a very pretty comedy, in which the person who wishes to come to an explanation with the lady who enters, makes her believe she called him, and thus obtains a hearing. If you have the same intention, sir, I return you a thousand thanks; and I really cannot comprehend how, esteeming you as I do, remembering you with so much pleasure, speaking of you so readily, having so high a relish for your understanding and your worth, *to say no more for fear of exciting jealousy*, I can, with so many things to promote a correspondence, have left you seven or eight months without saying a word to you. It is horrible; but what does it signify? let us

remain in this freedom, since it is not incompatible with the sentiments I have just expressed for you. I have seen M. de la Trousse; we talked of you the moment we had embraced; I think him, by what he told me, highly deserving the esteem you appear to entertain for him. The stroke is at least double. I found him perfectly acquainted with, and as sensible of your worth as you can possibly desire: he must pass through this place in his way to La Trousse; I shall show him your letter, and I do not think it will induce him to change his opinion. You have now M. de Noailles with you: you are in such favour there, that I shall rejoice with you on the pleasure you will receive at seeing a man whom you have inspired with such lively sentiments of esteem for you. I can easily imagine the confusion which the derangement of the states must have occasioned you; but you cannot dispense with going to Nimes. I must say a word to you respecting mademoiselle de Grignan. You know, I presume, that she has been in the convent of the Carmelites for eight months, and that she took the habit in form, with a zeal too violent to last. In the first three months she found herself so reduced, from the severity of the order, and her stomach so injured by the meagreness of the provision, that she was obliged to eat meat by compulsion. This inability to comply with the rules, even in her noviciate, induced her to quit the convent; but with so true a sentiment of piety, of humiliation at the delicacy of her health, and of such perfect contempt for the world, that the holy nuns have preserved an affectionate friendship for her; and she, who has only changed the habit, and not the sentiment, has no false shame, like those who grow weary of the life, and is now with us as usual, giving us the same edification: her residence at Paris is fixed at the Feuillantines,

where she will board with several others; she will return there at Martinmas, when we do: what attaches her to this house, is its vicinity to the Carmelites, where she goes almost daily, and whenever a certain princess is there: she takes from this holy convent all that agrees with her, that is, its devotion and conversation, and leaves the strictness of the order, to which she was by no means equal. It is thus God has conducted her, and gently repulsed her from the high degree of perfection to which she aspired, to support her in another a little inferior to it, which cannot but be good, since he gives her grace to love him alone, which is all that can be desired in this world. But Providence has also inspired her with the most noble, just, and praiseworthy thought it was possible to conceive for her family. She was determined, that her return to the world should not deprive her father of what she wished to give him by her civil death: and at quitting her convent, she made him a very handsome present of forty thousand crowns, which he owed her; that is, twenty thousand crowns principal, and the rest arrears and sums borrowed. This gift has been duly estimated, not only by those who love M. de Grignan, but by those who knew that all her property becoming personal at the age of five-and-twenty, if she had not disposed of any thing by will, would go almost wholly to her father; and that M. de Grignan would have eighty thousand crowns to pay mademoiselle d'Alerac, reckoning the principal of the jointure at forty thousand. This is enough in conscience for us not to pity the sister, and to rejoice that the family is relieved from this double payment. I own I have been very much affected at this seasonable and generous action; and I admire the goodness of her disposition, which led her to do, without affectation, the only thing in the world

that could render her dear to her family, where she is now received and considered as its benefactress. The understanding alone might have wrought this effect in another, but it is best when produced only by the heart. My daughter has contributed so well to this little manœuvre, that she has received double pleasure from its success. The chevalier has also done wonders; for you may suppose it has been necessary to assist, and give a form to, these good intentions. In short, all has gone well: even mademoiselle d'Alerac has entered into the justice of the sentiment. I pray that God may reward her by a good establishment, of which he still conceals from us every prospect, so that at present there is no appearance of any thing of the kind. Do I not weary you, sir, by this long account? you will have an indigestion of the Grignans. To divert you, let us talk a little of poor Sévigné: I should mention him with grief, if I could not tell you, that after five months of horrible suffering, from medicines which worked him to the very bone, the poor child is at length restored to perfect health: he has spent the whole of August with me in this retreat, which you are now acquainted with: we were alone with the good abbé, we had everlasting conversations, and this long intercourse has renewed our acquaintance with each other, and our acquaintance renewed our friendship. He is returned home with a stock of Christian philosophy, sprinkled with a grain of anchoretism, and particularly with an extreme affection for his wife, by whom he is equally beloved, which makes him altogether the happiest man in the world, because he passes his life agreeably to his own mind. We have talked of you twenty times with friendship and delight, and twenty times have we said, "Let us write to him, I wish it very much;" and when we have been on the point of giving ourselves this pleasure,

a demon has stepped in to distract our attention, and turn aside our good resolutions. What is to be done, my dear sir, in misfortunes like these? Perhaps you know the mortification of forming good resolutions, without the power of executing them. I fear our dear jealous friend calculates upon spending the winter with you; you will be very glad: you will laugh, and I shall cry; for I have so perfect a confidence in him, and so true a friendship for him, that I cannot lose the society of such a man, without feeling it painfully every moment: M. de Vardes, however, whom he is delighted to follow, will restore him to us, as he takes him away from us. I am pleased that this attachment continues; you will act your part well, and I consider the pleasure of seeing you, and of establishing himself again in your heart, as a happy circumstance for our friend. M. de Vardes has not been sufficiently particular in the information you omitted to tell me: the surest way is to write ourselves, as you see. I do not write to you often, but you will own when I do, that it is not for nothing.

LETTER * DCCLII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, November 26, 1686.

I THOUGHT, sir, that in purchasing an office, nothing was necessary but to find money; but I see that the manner of giving and receiving it is also to be considered. You will soon be quit of this embarrassment, from the desire you always have to contribute to your own tranquillity. Good heavens! how rational and how worthy of you is this disposition, and how just too is the choice of your company, when we come to speak and point out its excellence! If we judge from appear-

ances, it is very superior to our parliaments. I can fancy I hear M. and madame de Vernueil say a thousand kind things to you, and receive yours in return. When this princess mentions me, tell her it is impossible to be more at her service than I am. You have a sister of madame de la Troche with you, who is very amiable; the eldest will place all the attentions you pay her to her own account. I have presented your compliments to the chevalier de Grignan, who has received them graciously; he pointed out to the prince* the silence and discretion of your departure; nothing can exceed his concern and zeal for your interest: but we can answer for nothing when we are left-handed. What you told me the other day of a certain discourse he held with a certain person, makes me exhort you to preserve the noble tranquillity I have always witnessed in you, on the success of this affair. We only returned from Livri yesterday; the beauty of the weather, and the health of my daughter, which has been nearly established there, made us stay out of gratitude. In the two months we have been there, we have not been able to prevail on our friend to give us his company for more than ten days. He has a thousand little affairs there, to which he is accustomed: I know nothing of his intentions with respect to his departure. I almost doubt whether the society he meets at M. de Vardes' will not prevent him from setting out soon. I assure you I shall reap the advantage of his inclination to do so with pleasure, but I only contribute towards it by my wishes. Pray inform us how M. de Vardes finds himself in the midst of this troop of Bohemians; I can-

* The prince de Conti. It has been seen in the letter of June 13, 1684, that M. de Moulceau was judge in a law-suit in which M. de Grignan was engaged with this prince, and that he was moreover attached to him for other reasons.

not get this vision out of my eyes. We shall have a thousand things to tell you of the son-in-law†; in short, it struck us the other day, that if Homer had been acquainted with him, he would have chosen him in place of anger for his Achilles. We have a new prince and a new princess here———

LETTER *DCCLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, December 15, 1686.

I WROTE you a long letter, sir, more than a month ago, full of friendship, secrets, and confidence. I know not what became of it; it lost its way, perhaps, in seeking for you at the states, since you have not answered it; but this will not prevent me from telling you a melancholy, and at the same time a pleasing, piece of intelligence; the death of the prince, which happened the day before yesterday, the 11th instant, at a quarter after seven in the evening; and the return of the prince de Conti to court, through the kindness of the prince, who asked this favour of the king in his last moments: the king immediately granted it, and the prince had this consolation on his death-bed; but never was joy drowned in so many tears. The prince de Conti is inconsolable at the loss he has sustained; it could not be greater, particularly as he passed the whole time of his disgrace at Chantilly, where he made an admirable use of the understanding and abilities of the prince, and drew, from the fountain-head, all that was to be acquired from so great a master, by whom he was tenderly beloved. The prince flew, with a speed that has

† M. de Rohan, who had married the daughter of the count de Vardes.

cost him his life, from Chantilly to Fontainbleau, when madame de Bourbon was seized with the small-pox, in order to prevent the duke, who had not had the disorder, from nursing her, and being with her; for the duchess, who has always nursed her, would have been sufficient to satisfy him of the care that was taken of her health. He was very ill, and at length died of an oppression with which he was seized, which made him say, as he was on the point of returning to Paris, that he should take a much longer journey. He sent for his confessor, father Deschamps, and, after lying in a state of insensibility for twenty-four hours, and receiving all the sacraments, he died, regretted and bitterly lamented by his family and his friends: the king was much afflicted at the event, and, in short, the grief of losing so great a man, and so great a hero, whose place whole ages will not be able to supply, has been felt by all ranks. A singular circumstance happened three weeks ago, a little before the departure of the prince for Fontainbleau. Vernillon, one of his gentlemen, returning from the chase at three o'clock, saw, as he approached the castle, at one of the windows of the armoury, an apparition, that is, a man who had been dead and buried: he dismounted, and came nearer; he still saw it; his valet, who was with him, said, "I see the same, sir, that you see." Vernillon had been silent, that his valet might speak of his own accord: they entered the castle together, and desired the keeper to give them the key of the armoury: the keeper went with them; they found all the windows closed, and a silence which had been undisturbed for more than six months. This was told to the prince: he appeared struck with it at first, and afterwards laughed at it. Every one heard the story, and trembled for the prince: you see what the event has been. Vernillon is said to be a man of strong

understanding, and as little visionary as our friend Corbinelli could be; and the same apparition was seen by the servant. As this story is true, I send it you, that you may make your own reflections upon it, as we have done.

Since this letter was begun I have seen Briole, who has made me weep plentifully, at the simple and unaffected account he has given of this death: it is above all praise. The letter he wrote to the king is the finest thing in the world; his majesty was interrupted three or four times by his tears, in reading it: it was a farewell, and an assurance of perfect fidelity, asking pardon nobly for his past errors, into which he had been forced by the misfortunes of the times, and thanking him for the recal of the prince de Conti, in whose favour he said a great many things. He afterwards recommended to his family to be united, embraced them all, and made them all embrace one another in his presence, and promise to love each other as brothers. He gave a reward to all his people for their past services, begging their forgiveness for the ill example he had set them; and displayed a Christian devotion in receiving the sacraments, which is a source of eternal comfort and admiration. I beg my compliments to M. de Vardes on this event. My dear sir, adieu.

LETTER DCCLIV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 5, 1687.

Good day, and good year to you, my dear cousin. Good day, and good year to you, my dear niece. May this year be happier than those that have preceded it; may peace, quiet, and health, supply the place of good

fortune to you, which you do not possess, though you merit it: in short, may the web of your future days be woven with silk; but particularly, may you be exempt from enchantments; for the charm, I can tell you, was double: it fell upon me as well as upon you, and M. de Corbinelli and I often feel its power, by the constant remembrance we have of you both, and by the impossibility of forgetting you. We sometimes made efforts towards breaking it, like those who wish to swim or run in their sleep; but our efforts were as fruitless as theirs. It was not our eating salmon, which gave rise to our wish of seeing you; but whenever we were inclined to be witty, or the air of Livri, the chocolate, or the tea, had roused our vivacity, we were in despair that you were not with us, and we scrupled to laugh without you. Who could have believed that we should not have told you so the next day? But no, the spell was too powerful; we were obliged to wait for a new year: it now undraws the curtain, restores us to our liberty, and makes me, at the very commencement of it, begin a correspondence, in which we shall be considerable gainers. I am always delighted to see you in good spirits: seek to amuse yourself, and for this purpose employ all the means you took from hence. Your verses are pleasant and easy, and remind us of you very agreeably. Your letter to the little woman at Paris has entertained us highly. She defends herself very prettily. I can scarcely believe that you have had no hand in the verses she sends you on the subject of her vapours, and of the reason which, perhaps, made M. de Monjeu deficient in the rites of hospitality: nothing can be better. It seems as if I ought to thank you for the pains you take to beautify Chaseu. This charming situation well deserves the trouble you bestow on it. I can easily conceive how much you are attached to the

neighbourhood. You have good society there. I met M. d'Autun the other day, who told me wonders of you all. I believe Toulonjon is very glad to be so rich, as to be able to repair Alonne. M. d'Autun told me yesterday, that my aunt had paid all her son's debts before she died. I am surprised and rejoiced at this, for I dreaded the effect of avarice; and I was sorry that this vile monster should be found in our blood. Thank God, my dear cousin, you and I are wholly exempted from it: so is our Provençale. What she inherits from the Rabutins, joined to the Sévignés and the Grignans, places her even beyond the reach of suspicion. She is still in Paris, surrounded with business.

You have heard, my dear cousin, the particulars of the prince's death. I think his eulogy is pronounced in very few words, by saying that he joined to the beauty of an heroic life, a truly Christian death; that he equally discharged the duties of a pious Christian, a faithful subject, a kind father, and a good master; that in twenty-four hours he settled all his affairs, with a firmness, tranquillity, mildness, and clearness of intellect, which made him appear as in the day of battle; for it is said, that, on all these occasions, he was perfect; and that death, which is the most important action of our life, has been also the noblest part of his. This reminds me of the verses you formerly wrote under his portrait:

De sa gloire la terre est pleine,
Comme le foudre on craint son bras,
Il a gagné mille combats,
Et l'on doute encore s'il n'est pas
Plus soldat qu'il n'est capitaine*.

* The earth is full of his glory; his arm is feared like thunder; he has gained a thousand victories; and it is doubted whether he is the greatest soldier, or the greatest general.

M. d'Autun is still very much afflicted at this event: he will tell you many particulars respecting it, when you see him. The king has regretted his loss, and has reinstated the prince de Conti in favour, in compliance with the dying request of the prince. The duke, now the prince, has retained all his household, and increased all their salaries. He appears afflicted in the highest degree. In short, every one has done his duty. But what compensates for this misfortune, and converts the general sentiment of grief into joy, is the perfect health of the king, for which we cannot be sufficiently thankful, and which proves, by the public cheerfulness, that the expression of sorrow for his illness † was unfeigned. If you will send us the letter you have written to the king, you will oblige us.

LETTER * DCCLV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, Twelfth-day, 1687.

I OMIT all I might say in answer to your pious and moral reflections, thinking I should write a repetition, instead of a reply. I should return you your own words, and my letter would only be an echo to yours; because I am fortunate enough to think as you do on this occasion. I had rather, therefore, scold you, and tell you that you are very delicate and very affected, to suppose yourself seized with an attack of infirmity, be-

† At the end of the preceding year, Lewis XIV. had undergone an operation for the fistula. It is well known that the first surgeon, Felix, had practised this operation upon many persons who were afflicted in the same way for several months before. He invented new instruments, and was successful. The king displayed true courage in this dangerous and painful trial.

cause a grandfather, before your daughter has taken the liberty of presenting you with another proof of it. What a misfortune! And to whom too do you make the complaint? to whom do you address yourself? and what would you do, if you had one of the age of sixteen, who had taken the habit at the Visitation of Aix? Really, you would lead a fine life; and I bear the affront as if it were nothing. I contemplate this evil, which has not yet proved itself so, with heroic courage: I prepare myself for its consequences, with peace and tranquillity; and seeing there is no way of escape, and that I am not the strongest, I think of the obligation I owe to God, for conducting me so gently to the grave. I thank him for the desire he daily gives me to prepare for death, and the wish of not draining my life to the dregs. Extreme old age is frightful and humiliating: the good Corbinelli and I see a painful instance of this truth hourly, in the poor abbé de Coulanges, whose helplessness and infirmities make us wish never to reach this period. See how we philosophise, as it becomes Christians! and this is what we entreat you to do, when your grand-daughter shall be sixteen years old. But there is plenty of time yet, and you know more of this than we do; still I could not help taking advantage eagerly of this subject of old age to write you a sermon, knowing that if I lost the opportunity, I should never recover it. Your prince de Conti profits wisely of the kindness and favour of the king, which the prince obtained for him. I am sometimes grieved, that you do not reign in the house of this rising sun. M. de la Trousse is happy in being beloved by *tutti quanti* (all, as many as they may be), but particularly by such a *reprobate* as you: present my regards to him, and to M. de Vardes, whom I truly respect and love. I beg my compliments to your lady. I am delighted to please

her, and that my very natural admiration of the purity of her language has not embroiled me with her. I also thank your daughter, and congratulate her on having raised you to a dignity which I have so long possessed: as for yourself, sir, be assured that if I were not restrained by a jealous man at my elbow, I should say enough to enrage him. M. de Grignan is just arrived: all this household is at your service, and so is our poor dear abbé.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

Taken in one point of view, sir, I cannot help thinking the title of grandfather a very noble one: a tribe of children come into the world, who honour us more, and often love us better, than our own children. On the other side, grandfathers are in continual fear of a greater number of inconveniences, or untoward circumstances, that may befall these, either in their conduct, or their fortune. But the surest way is, to be pleased with the decrees of heaven, and to submit to them: it is the only means of softening them. I am sorry, not to be at the conversations of the Récollets, nor at the conferences of M. de Greffeille, with you and the wits. You would have made me perfect in matters of law. I should also have taken great pleasure in teaching your missionaries the art of reclaiming the protestants, and of repairing the injuries the monastic tribe have done us. But, alas! God has not thought fit that it should be so. The death of the prince has edified the whole world, and you as well as the rest of us. I could have wished he had given the public some sign of life, with regard to his princess. Adieu, my friend; I embrace you and your dear family with my whole heart, wife, daughter, and grandchildren, but you more particularly than all, without rancour, though you are my rival.

LETTER *DCCLVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

January 27, 1687.

If this letter gives you any pleasure, as you sometimes flatter me that my letters are not disagreeable to you, you have to thank the chevalier de Grignan for it. It is he who desires me to write to you, to ask you some questions respecting the waters of Balaruc. Are they not in your neighbourhood? for what disorders are they taken? are they taken for the gout? have they ever benefited those who have taken them? at what time are they taken? are they drank, used as a bath, or is the part affected simply immersed in them? In short, sir, if you can patiently bear this long string of interrogatories, and will have the goodness to answer them, you will perform a great act of charity to a man, who esteems you most, and is most afflicted with the gout. I might finish my letter here, but I wish to ask you how you find yourself, on being a grandfather. I conclude you have received the scolding I gave you on the dislike you expressed to me at this dignity: I brought myself forward as an example to you, and said, "Do not grieve, but prepare for it." In short, the prospect is worse than the reality: Providence conducts us with so much kindness through the different periods of our life, that we scarcely feel the change; our days glide gently and imperceptibly along, like the motion of the hour-hand, which we cannot discover. If, at the age of twenty, we were to be treated as the superiors of our family, and were showed in a glass the countenance we now exhibit, or at least shall exhibit at the age of sixty,

at the same time comparing it with that of twenty, we should shrink back, and be terrified at the spectacle: but we advance gradually; we are the same to-day as yesterday, and to-morrow as to-day: thus we go on, without perceiving it, which is a miracle of the Providence I adore. My pen has led me to this length, without my thinking of it. You were, no doubt, one of the good company at cardinal de Bonzi's.

Adieu, sir; I am unchangeable with regard to the esteem and friendship I have promised you.

LETTER * DCCLVII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, February 14, 1687.

Let us enjoy the pleasure of being no longer under the spell of enchantments. You must not praise me for having thought the first of this; for it is certain I felt their effects. But, my dear cousin, what do you expect from me to-day? I can tell you of nothing but death, for my imagination is so full of it, as to exclude every thing else.

The first I have to mention is the death of marshal de Créqui, after an illness of four days: how short has been his career, and how wroth has he been with the grim monster, who, unmindful of his projects and affairs, came thus unseasonably to interrupt his plans! Never was death so unwelcome; but he was obliged to submit to its laws. He received the sacraments. Nine days after, the duke de Créqui, his elder brother, followed him. This was yesterday morning, after a long illness; and he was scarcely cold, when the duke de Gêvres received his office of governor of Paris. He was in luck; he was the first who told the news to the king,

and the first to obtain this noble gift. I have just read the almanac of Milan with my own eyes: "The same day, the 13th of this month, in such a sign, a great government shall again be filled; one brother will not lament the other." You will agree with me, that this is a singular coincidence. How low is the house of Créqui fallen, and what great dignities, within the space of a few days, have gone out of the family! The duke d'Estrées is dead at Rome; and the day the news was received at Paris, the duchess d'Estrées, his mother-in-law, your cousin, died of apoplexy. You see, my poor children, that nothing can be more melancholy than this letter: if I were often to write you such, it would be much better to be again under the force of enchantment. Your noble and excellent dispositions, and the gaiety so necessary and salutary to you, would sink under them. Let us talk of different times. I have found, by chance, Moreri, under my hand: I sought for our Rabutins; they are very good and very ancient. Mayeul lived as a great lord, in 1147, more than five hundred years ago. This is a noble stock.

LETTER * DCCLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, March 10, 1687.

Again, my dear cousin, have I to enter upon the melancholy subjects of death and lamentation. But how can I be silent on the most beautiful, the most magnificent, and the most splendid funeral pomp, which has been witnessed in the days of mortal man? that of the late prince, and all he has ever been! His fathers are represented by medals, down to St. Lewis; all his victories by bas-relief, under canopies of open tents, supported by skeletons, whose attitudes are admirable.

The mausoleum, which rises almost to the roof, is covered with a still higher canopy in the form of a pavilion, the four corners of which fall again like tents. The whole square of the choir is ornamented with these bas-reliefs, and devices underneath them, emblematic of the different actions of his life. That of his league with the Spaniards is expressed by a dark night, with three Latin words, signifying, that what is done in the absence of the sun should be concealed*. The whole is scattered over with fleurs-de-lys of a sombre colour, and a small lamp reflects ten thousand little stars. I forget half; but you will have the book, which will tell you all. If I did not suppose you have already received a copy, I would have accompanied this letter by one; but a duplicate would have afforded you no pleasure.

Every body has been to see this superb decoration. It has cost the present prince a hundred thousand francs, but it is an expense which does him great honour. M. de Meaux pronounced the funeral oration: we shall see it in print. This, my dear cousin, is a rough sketch of the subject of the piece. We are still melancholy; but to cheer you a little, I shall pass to another extreme, that is, from death to marriage, and from excessive pomp and ceremony, to extreme homeliness and familiarity, both being as original as it is possible to be. It is the marriage of the son of the duke de Grammont, of the age of fifteen, with the daughter of M. de Noailles, which is to take place this evening at Versailles. It is to be managed thus. No one is to be invited, no one to be apprised of it: the bride and

* This reminds us of the ingenious idea of Michael Corneille, which has been seen in the gallery of Chantilly, where the muse of history is represented as tearing from the Life of the Prince, the pages which contain the account of his victories against his country.

bridegroom will each sup at home. At midnight they will meet at the church, without the father and mother being present, unless they are at that time at Versailles. The ceremony will take place; there will be no grand display of toilets, no putting the bride to bed; this will be left to the governor and governess to manage. The next morning they will not be tormented with witticisms and indecent jests. They will rise: the young man will attend mass and the king's dinner, and the young lady will dress herself as usual, and pay visits with her good mamma; she will not keep her bed in state, like a country bride, exposed to crowds of impertinent visitors; and this wedding (an event which is generally notorious enough) will be jumbled in the most natural and prettiest manner possible, with all the other events of life, and will glide so insensibly into the usual train of things, that no one will suppose a festival has taken place in the two families. This is what I was determined to finish my letter with; and I contend, my dear cousin, that this picture is as extraordinary, in its kind, as the other.

I have just seen a prelate who was present at the funeral oration. He tells us, that M. de Meaux surpassed himself, and that so fine a subject was never so well appreciated, and so ably handled. I have seen M. d'Autun here two or three times. He appears to me to be one of your best friends. I think him very agreeable; he has so much affability, that I do not wonder at the attachment of those with whom he associates. He has had friends of such high rank, by whom he has been so long and tenderly beloved, that this would be a sufficient claim upon our esteem, if he had no other title to it. My daughter sends you a great many remembrances. She is engaged in a law-suit, which makes her not unlike the countess de Pimbêche. I con-

gratulate you on having to cultivate the body and mind of the little de Langhac. This is a fine name for administering medicaments, as Moliere says; and is an amusement in which we are daily engaged with the little de Grignan.

LETTER *DCCLIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, April 3, 1687.

My beautiful and robust health was attacked ten days ago, sir, by a slight colic, composed of bile, and other human miseries, which, slight as it was, made me feel that I am mortal: this has occupied me so seriously as to cause a distraction of mind that prevented my writing to you. I mention this, to give you an idea of my indisposition: for the desire of answering you was so strong in my mind, that it could not have been overcome, but by something considerable. Happily, M. de Vardes restored our *friend* to me at this time; but his philosophy, which had been previously prepared for the sufferings of M. de Vardes, did not make the smallest effort towards persuading me that mine was not worthy of my attention; and, in short, I found myself, in a few days, in a state to preach to others, and quietly resume my Lent, which had only been interrupted by a few broths. I did not doubt, sir, that your presence and conversation would be of greater service to M. de la Trousse than all I could write. With regard to father Bourdaloue, it would be a bad sign for Montpellier, if he were not liked there, after having been so truly and sincerely admired at court and at Paris. I can conceive that the subject of the new brothers, in-

terwoven with the usual beauty of his sermons, must produce a very fine effect. It is by such passages of zeal and eloquence that he delights and transports us: he has often suspended my breath by the extreme attention with which I have hung upon the energy of his discourse, and I could not recover it, till he was pleased to make an end of one subject, only to begin another of equal beauty. I am certain you know what I mean, and that you are as much charmed with the wit, good sense, cheerfulness, and affability of father Bourdaloue in private life, as enchanted with his sermons in public. I suppose you will find means to keep out of the confusion of the grand festival, which may cause so much sacrilege. The abbé de Quincy, nominated to the bishopric of Poitiers, did not think his lungs sufficiently strong to discharge his duties satisfactorily to himself, and has resigned it again to the king. This action is noble and rare, and has been very deservedly praised. His majesty has appointed in his stead M. de Tréquier, of our Lower Britany, deputed here by the province, a very pious prelate, formerly father of the Oratory, who, with a very ample chest, has dedicated himself canonically to all the fatigues of a pastoral life.

M. de Harlay and M. de Besons have filled the two vacant places at the council, and M. de la Reynie and M. de Bigon are become ordinaries. Those who are mortified, will be consoled when they least expect it by the death of some old dean. You know there is a carousal, at which thirty lords and ladies will have the pleasure of amusing the court at their expense. Poor Polignac, who was on the point of marrying mademoiselle de Rambures, has found, on the proposal of being a menin, that his majesty has not yet forgiven his mother, and the match has been very disagreeably broken off. Mademoiselle de Rambures appeared

grieved at it; it is to be hoped he will be more fortunate in his third attempt. M. Dangeau fondly anticipated the pleasure of espousing the most beautiful, the most lovely, the most youthful, the most refined, and the most fairy-like nymph at court. O too happy in the possession of such a wife! We must believe Molière. But what delighted him most was the name of *Bavaria;* to be the *cousin of the dauphiness;* to wear *mourning for all Europe, as a relation;* in short, nothing was wanting to perfect the beauty of the circumstance. As it is impossible, however, to be completely happy in this world, God permitted the dauphiness, on seeing the young lady sign herself every where, *Sophia of Bavaria,* to be so transported with rage, that the king was obliged to go three times to pacify her, being alarmed for her pregnancy. At length every thing was erased, blotted out, obliterated, M. de Strasbourg having asked pardon, and acknowledged, that his niece springs from a branch that has long been broken off, separated, and debased by inferior alliances, and which has never borne any other name than that of *Levestein.*

This is the price at which this brilliant and ridiculous scene has terminated, and by promising that she should not be *a Bavaria,* or at least, a cousin: but you will allow, that, to a man elated with such a prospect, *the first step backwards* cannot be very agreeable. You may guess how the charitable courtiers are affected at this adventure; and, for my own part, I confess, that all the evils which spring from vanity afford me a malicious pleasure. Do not name me in this affair. Be assured, sir, that I am one of the persons in the world who esteem you most and know you best (which is the same thing). Tell me a little news of yourself occasionally, and confer a further obligation on your humble servant, by assuring father Bourdaloue of my

sincere respect, and M. de la Trousse of my faithful friendship. I wished our Corbinelli to add a line, but he is slipped through my fingers, and I cannot find him again.

LETTER *DCCLX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 5, 1687.

My niece de Montataire came to see me to-day; in speaking of you she strangely alarmed me, by the state in which she described my poor niece de Coligny. There is but one degree beyond what she has suffered, and this degree is so dreadful, that I dare not even think of it, either on her account, or on yours, my dear cousin, whose life would be pitiable indeed without her charming society. Tell me then speedily how she is, and how you are. I am now not surprised that I did not hear from you: alas! my poor children, you were otherwise employed. Your amiable bishop is with you at present. I pity you, if you are not in a situation to enjoy his stay at Autun. He desired me to write to him; but I promise you I shall do no such thing: I am discouraged and overwhelmed by the superiority of his mind. I saw, by chance, at the moment of his departure, two divine pieces of his composition, and in proportion as I read, and was delighted with them, I formed a resolution never to write to such a man. Let him return then, if he wishes to know what I think. The suavity and ease of his wit agrees with my weakness; its dazzling brilliancy is concealed by his modesty and goodness. This is the state of my feelings with respect to your worthy prelate, while I

am in real pain for what you and my niece have suffered.

The king goes to Luxembourg on the 20th, to view his noble conquest. His journey will take him eleven days, he will stay there three, and will be eleven in returning. This will take him a month. The dauphin, the duchess, the princess de Conti, and several other ladies, will accompany him. The dauphiness will not leave Versailles. The king will be attended by few troops, and only half his guard.

LETTER * DCCLXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, April 25, 1687.

I BEGIN my letter to-day, but I shall not finish it till I have heard the prince's funeral oration to-morrow by father Bourdaloue. I have seen M. d'Autun, who has received your letter, and the fragment of that I wrote to you. I know not whether it was worth sending to him here: what may be very passable at Autun, may not experience the same favour at Paris. All my hope is, that you corrected it in passing through your hands, for what I write stands very much in need of correction. Be this as it may, my dear cousin, it was read at the hotel de Guise: I arrived there at the same time; they would have praised me, but I modestly refused to hear them, and I scolded both you and M. d'Autun. So much for the fragment. Your reflections are melancholy and just, upon the overthrow of the house of Crequi. Canaples is the only one that remains of the three brothers, after all the tribulations and misfortunes which you have so well detailed. But à little Blanchefort is saved from the wreck, who is returned with glory

from Hungary, handsome, well made, prudent, virtuous, polite, and afflicted, without being cast down, at the misfortunes of his family: he finds all roads prepared to receive him with pleasure in the world*. He will perhaps make as great a fortune as his fathers, seeing himself as high as the rest. Nothing, in my opinion, is so well calculated to form an honest man, as to begin the world anew.

I am convinced with you that the fate of the poor duchess d'Estrées would have been very different, if it had been united with yours. Rank was a misfortune to her, and delivered her up to apoplexy, beginning the attack by the deprivation of her charming understanding, which is, in my opinion, a worse evil than death.

I am transported with the prince's funeral oration by father Bourdaloue. He surpassed himself, which is saying a great deal. His text was: "And the king lamented over Abner,—and the king said unto his servants: Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

His heart is buried at the Jesuits. He spoke of it with a grace and eloquence that sweeps, or carries, all before it, whichever you please. He proved that this heart was firm, upright, and christian. *Firm:* because at the highest period of his glorious life he was superior to praise; and he enumerated his victories, and pointed out to us as a miracle, that a hero, in such a situation, should be wholly exempt, as he was, from vanity and self-love. This was treated divinely. *Upright:* and here he entered, without scruple, into his errors, and his war against the king. This part of his character, which we think of with trembling, which we would

* This young Blanchefort died in 1696. A letter of madame de Sévigné's upon this event, which has never before appeared, will be found in its regular order.

willingly avoid, draw a veil over, or wipe out with a sponge, he discussed freely, and showed, by five or six reflections, particularly the refusal of the sovereignty of Cambray, and the offer he made to renounce his own interest, rather than obstruct the peace; that in the midst of his irregularities his heart was well disposed, that he was turned away by the force of his destiny, by reasons which had dragged him, as it were, into a war, and occasioned a separation which he inwardly detested, and which he had repaired to the utmost of his power on his return, by his services, as at Tollus, Senef, &c., by his proofs of affection for the king, and his constant desire to please him. It is impossible to describe with what judgement all this was managed, and what lustre he gave to his hero, by the inward grief he depicted so ably, and with so much appearance of probability. *Christian:* for he had said, in his last moments, that notwithstanding the splendour of his life, he had never felt the true faith extinguished in his heart, but had carefully preserved its principles. The orator, believing this to be true, because the prince had affirmed, refers to God even his moral virtues, and heroic perfections, which by the holiness of his death he had consummated. He spoke of his return to God for the last two years, which he proved to be noble, great, and sincere; and he painted his death in colours which will be indelible in my memory, and that of the whole audience, who appeared rivetted to all he said, by an attention which scarcely suffered them to breathe. To tell you with what strokes of eloquence his discourse was embellished, would be impossible, and I even spoil it by the roughness of my sketch. It is as if a sign-painter were to retouch a picture of Raphael's. In short, my dear children, this will only serve to excite your curiosity to see this piece in print. The discourse

of M. de Meaux is already published. It is beautiful and masterly. The parallel between the prince and M. de Turenne is a little in extremes†; but he excuses himself by denying that it is a parallel: he says, it is a grand spectacle of two great men given by God to the king; and he thence takes a very fair opportunity of praising his majesty, who can so well dispense with these great generals, his genius is so vast, and his destiny so glorious: I have spoiled this too; but it is a very beautiful period. Adieu, my dear cousin; I am tired, and so are you. I embrace thee, my dear niece, and thy little de Langhac.

LETTER * DCCLXII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Paris, Monday, April 29, 1667.

So you like my letters, sir; I am delighted that you do; this is one which will be worth a hundred. My robust health was slightly attacked about a month ago, by a little colic, a little rheumatism, a little vexation: consequently all this might excuse me from writing to you; but I had rather die than another should tell you, that the prince de Conti is at length returned to court; he is this night at Versailles, and the king, like a kind father, has restored him to favour, after having exiled

† It appears that the court had taken it amiss, that Bossuet should have placed a gentleman, even a *Bouillon*, by the side, and on a level, with a prince of the blood. This is what is called a parallel in extremes. It had also been revised for publication, if we may believe another letter to Bussy: this appears to us a little strange in the present day, but such was the spirit of the times, such the refined servitude of the courtiers of Lewis XIV.

him for a while, to leave him at leisure to make his own reflections. No doubt he has done so, and the court will be very gay and splendid on the occasion. His majesty will make several chevaliers at Whitsuntide, but it will be only a family promotion: M. de Chartres, the duke de Bourbon, the prince de Conti, and M. du Maine, but no one else: all the other candidates must be pleased to have patience; but they will not see without mortification the adjournment of their hopes. The duke de Vieuville is governor to the duke de Chartres. Madame de Polignac, who is not mademoiselle d'Alerac, paid a visit yesterday to madame de Grignan. She was brilliant, lively, elated with the grandeur of the house of Polignac, fond of talking of the name, and all the personages belonging to it. She has taken upon herself the fortune of the two brothers, and has supported generously, and courageously, the frown and disapprobation of the king. She has employed skilful artificers; and instead of deserting the deserted, like women in general, she has made it a point of honour to reinstate them at court. I could answer for it that she will revive and re-establish this family: this is what Providence had in store for them, and which prevented us from being able to read distinctly, what it had written for mademoiselle d'Alerac. Adieu, sir, love me, for indeed you ought. I love your mind, your worth, your wisdom, your folly, your virtue, your humour, your goodness, in short, all that belongs to you; and wish you, and the pretty covey under your wing, which must afford you so much pleasure and comfort, every possible happiness. All here salute you, except our *friend*, who knows nothing of this hasty letter. I shall talk of you a great deal with Bourdaloue. Madame Dangeau, formerly *Bavaria*, is very prudent, very amiable, and makes her husband very happy; she might have made him very ridiculous.

LETTER * DCCLXIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, the last day of May, 1687.

I MUST never have been in the country, to be ignorant of the meaning of the word *glean* †. It is a slight consolation which Providence gives to the poor; and of which we are an example, when we go to collect our scattered means. I know not how you find it as to your estates, but I find, my dear cousin, that the only way to live by ours is to reside on them, for when we reside elsewhere, it is almost impossible to obtain the transport of our revenues.

We expect the king in six days. He has seen the wonderful fortifications at Luxembourg, and his new subjects have seen him in perfect health. M. de Lavardin is not yet ready to set out. The pope has revived an ancient bull, by which he deprives sovereign princes of all immunities and franchises, and directs law-suits to be commenced against all criminals found in the palace of the queen of Sweden. You see plainly that this squib must have time to spend itself before the departure of the ambassador. I embrace my dear niece, and can easily comprehend the pleasure it will be to her to remove, provided it be only for a short time; she will find your conversation the more agreeable afterwards. We are sometimes too much accustomed to the best things, and feel their value more by losing them for a while; let it however be a little while only, in this case, for it would be too cruel not to be with you when she has the opportunity. Ask our

† Bussy makes use of this term in speaking of a circuit he had taken to his different tenants to collect his rents.

friend Corbinelli if I am not right. I must add, that what you sent me in your last letter pleased me highly. Good heavens, my dear cousin, how much wit you possess! What a pity it is, that you have not been happy! for prosperity, which always makes us brilliant, would have given us the pleasure of seeing to what eminence it would have raised you. But then again, you would not have had time to amuse yourself in the way you do. You would have performed achievements, which would have dignified your family, but you would not have had leisure to divert your friends. In this respect, therefore, we may say that misfortune is good for something. I cannot but admire you.

My daughter sends you her remembrances. I believe I have already told you, that from the beautiful Magdalonne she has become the countess de Pimbêche. This is the constant effect of law-suits.

LETTER *DCCLXIV.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, June 4, 1667.

On my return, madam, from Forléans, Bussy, and Dijon, I found a letter from you here, which gave me real pleasure. I gain more in proportion from my estates than you do from Bourbilly, because I am upon the spot, and you are at a distance. As you say, madam, we live upon our revenues when we consume them ourselves; but, sent away, they amount almost to nothing. With regard to your assertion, that when we are engaged at court, it is almost impossible to transport our revenues thither, I perfectly agree with you. But shall I give you a remedy for this evil? Get yourself exiled, madam; it is not so difficult a thing as you may ima-

gine, and you will make use of your provisions at Bourbilly. What you have done for your children, madam, is very discreet, humane, and even christian-like. In establishing them you have stripped yourself of the good things of the world, and you will therefore quit it with less sorrow when the time shall arrive.

As the pope is a man of great probity, he is firm in his resolutions; and when he is convinced he is in the right, nothing could induce him to change them. It is grievous, indeed, that these pious obstinacies should be found in his way: but his life is so holy, that christian kings would disgrace themselves if they quarrelled with him. We must at the same time confess the truth, that exemptions are odious when they suffer crimes to remain unpunished. It is an honour to a great pope to reform this abuse, and even to a great king not to complain of it too loudly *.

I believe with you, madam, that your niece has liked me the better for her absence. I used to say of love, many years ago, and it is the same with friendship:

La longue absence en amour ne vaut rien,
Mais si tu veux que ton feu s'eternise,
Il faut se voir et quitter par reprise:
Un peu d'absence fait grand bien.

In love, long absence is a dangerous thing.
But if thy flame thou wouldst eternalise,
Oft quit thy object, often meet again:
From trifling absence, good effects arise.

* Lewis XIV. was far from thinking with Bussy. Lavardin set out, and, as it is well known, entered Rome with an escort, or train, of a thousand armed men, with whom he put himself in possession of the quarter and ancient privileges of the ambassadors. He was excommunicated, but the pope was forced to yield. The violence and haughtiness with which this affair was treated, did not a little contribute (according to the remark of Henault) to strengthen the league of Augsbourg, which was formed in the preceding year, and concluded at the beginning of this, during the carnival of Venice.

LETTER *DCCLXV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, June 17, 1687.

I SHALL not waste my time, my dear cousin, in replying to your answers, though it be the way to keep up the conversation. I wish to begin by informing you with sorrow of the death of your good and faithful friend the duke de Saint-Aignan. A fever of seven or eight days has taken him off, and we may say he has died young, though I am told he was in reality eighty-four years of age. He neither felt in mind nor body the sad inconveniences of old age. He always served the king on his knees with an activity persons of eighty-four never possess. He has been the father of children within these two years. In short, he has been a perfect prodigy. God will reward him for what he has done for his honour and the glory of the world. I have been affected at this event, upon your account. He has loved you faithfully. You were his brother in arms, and chivalry was your bond of union. He has rendered you services which no other courtier would have dared nor have been inclined to do. He has professed a friendship that has long been without example. He had an air and manner that were an ornament to the court. If the fashion should be established to draw parallels in funeral orations †, I could never endure a parallel in his, for he was certainly singular in his kind, a great original without a copy.

We have read with grief what you have written to the king. In wishing to affect him, you have penetrated

† This is an indirect stroke at Bossuet. See Letter 25th April, and the note.

us. It was not at me you aimed. Would to God your letter might have the same effect upon his heart that it has produced on ours. What you represent to him is worthy of this. There are parts so pathetic, and turns, to induce him to assist you, so extraordinary, so urgent, and so true, that they overwhelm us. This letter has been received; and it will not be your fault, nor that of your poor friend, if it does not procure you some favour. It is true that your misfortunes, though very great, are inferior to your courage.

Adieu, my dear cousin, I conclude by embracing you and our dear Coligny. If we are fortunate enough to see you here, we shall be truly rejoiced, and will make you agree that if sometimes "from trifling absence good effects arise," very ill effects may arise from too long a one. The beautiful countess is satisfied and delighted that you love her under every name. She entreats you, father and daughter, to continue your regard; she deserves this by the manner in which she feels towards you.

LETTER * DCCLXVI.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, June 20, 1687.

You are right, madam, to interrupt our conversations to talk to me of my dear friend. For my part, I talk of him to every one; but I wish to say more of him to you than to others. It is upwards of forty years since we were brothers, as you say, in arms; and this friendship lasted fifteen or sixteen years without any intercourse between us. It is thirty years since we met again at court, he as first gentleman of the king's bed-

chamber, and I as colonel general of the cavalry. It was at that period that my friend, finding me persecuted by ill offices that were done me with the king, first declared to his majesty that he was my old friend, and that he would answer, not only for my fidelity to his service, but for my respect to his person. During the thirteen months that I was in prison, a week did not pass without his saying something to the king in my favour, and often with a boldness which his friendship for me could alone excuse. Such, madam, was the friend I have lost: judge whether there is a man more worthy of pity than I, or more worthy of esteem than he. For in addition to his merit with respect to myself, he possessed an excellent understanding, extraordinary courage, and a heart which would not have disgraced the greatest monarch that ever sat upon a throne.

LETTER * DCCLXVII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, July 28, 1687.

It is impossible to compose a more beautiful or just eulogium, my dear cousin, than that you have pronounced over your brave and generous friend, the late duke de St. Aignan. You display at the same time a heart overflowing with affection and gratitude which deserves in return an eulogium from us. I felt this loss immediately on your account, and, however painfully it may affect you now, you will feel it still more when you come to this country, and no longer find this excellent mediator between the king and you. I shall carefully preserve the letter which contains the praises, *without a parallel*, of your generous friend. It shows the perfection of both your hearts,

and serves me as a bond, by which I claim a part of the friendship you bestowed on him. This succession is on one side very melancholy, and on the other very gratifying. The gazette will have informed you of the promotion of M. de Beauvilliers and others. I could very well have dispensed with giving you this information: it is an additional misfortune, to see so many others happy. Is not this true, my dear niece? The Italians say wisely: *Non ti invidio, no, ma piango al mio.* (I do not envy thy fate, but I lament my own.) For my part, I do not know whether I stop there; for it seems to me as if I not only pitied myself, but envied others. The severe morality of our friend Corbinelli will scold me: I fly.

LETTER *DCCLXVIII.

THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Cressia, August 6, 1687.

I DID not doubt, madam, that you had answered my last letter from Chaseu; and I have just received the answer: I wrote to you, however, from hence, two days ago. I am glad you are satisfied with my heart, on the subject of my poor friend, and I confirm to you the donation of the place he occupied in it. It is indeed true, that I shall never find a St. Aignan between the king and me. I have not seen the gazette, and do not therefore know what has been done for M. de Beauvilliers and the rest. At the beginning of my disgrace I keenly felt these promotions. I was not then quite dead, but time and resignation have given me the *coup de grace;* and the marshals of France that are now made, give me as little concern as those that were

made by Henry the Fourth, or that will be made by the duke of Burgundy.

LETTER *DCCLXIX.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, September 2, 1687.

I HAVE just received your letters from Cressia, my dear cousin, which have afforded me some consolation, for I am overwhelmed with sorrow, having seen my dear uncle expire within these ten days: you know what he was to his dear niece. There is no favour he has not conferred on me, whether in leaving me his entire property, or preserving and retrieving that of my children. He extricated me from the abyss into which I was plunged at the death of M. de Sévigné, gained my law-suits, improved my estates, paid my debts, made my son's estate the prettiest and most agreeable place possible, settled my children: in short, it is to his unceasing cares that I owe the peace and comfort of my life. You will easily conceive that such high obligations and so long an acquaintance, must create a severe pang when we have to separate for ever. The loss of old people does not prevent it from being painful, when we have so much reason to love them, and have seen them constantly before us. My dear uncle was ninety years of age: he was weighed down with infirmity: life was a burthen to him. What then would we wish him? a longer period of suffering? This reflection has helped to calm my mind. His illness was that of a man of thirty; an unintermitting fever, and an inflammation on the lungs. In seven days he terminated a long and honourable life with sentiments of piety, penitence,

and love towards God, which makes us hope his mercy will be extended to him. This, my dear cousin, has occupied and afflicted me for a fortnight. I am penetrated with grief and gratitude.

Our hearts are not hard: I remember all that gratitude and friendship led you to think and write on the merit and good qualities of M. de St. Aignan. We are very far from forgetting those to whom we are obliged. I thought your rondo very pretty: whatever you take in hand acquires an incomparable charm even when your heart has no share in it; for I conceive that gallantry may remain in your wit, without the charms of the amiable Toulonjon making any great impression upon you. I do not doubt the noble titles you have found in the archives of the house of Coligny. Many reflections might be made on the remains of those great personages, whose estates have passed into other hands.

LETTER DCCLXX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Nevers, Saturday, Sept. 20, 1687, 6 o'clock at night.

I RECEIVED your letter this morning at La Charité; but you have been under a strange mistake in regard to our motions. We know nothing of Pont Agasson: we came to Milly. You must also make your apology to the weather, which you have accused so wrongfully; never, I say never, could any thing have been more settled and serene. We have had but few or no fogs, except in a morning, and they were quickly dispersed; besides, the roads are fine beyond description, they are every where like a gravel-walk; the mountains are levelled

into plains, and the road to Hell is become the way to Paradise: but here I believe I am a little mistaken; for that way, we are told, is narrow and difficult, whereas this is wide, pleasant, and easy: in short, the intendants have done miracles, and we have never ceased praising them as they deserve. If ever I go to Lyons, this is the road for me. However, here we are at Nevers; we purposed to have gone to Moulins to-morrow, but a madame Ferret, an acquaintance of ours, has sent the person, at whose house we lodged, to madame de Chaulnes, to shorten our journey by two days; for, instead of going to Moulins, and from thence to Bourbon, we shall go to-morrow straight to Bourbon, which is only ten leagues. This is a great saving; and pleases me so much, that, exclusive of the friendship I have for madame de Chaulnes, who would never have taken this journey but upon my account, and the convenience of having our little vessel fastened to the great one, the certainty of losing no time, and of finding you at our return, make me for once prefer the waters of Bourbon to those of Vichi. I thank you a thousand times for your care and advice; but the waters of Bourbon are to the full as salutary as those of Vichi, let people say what they will; besides, from hence to Vichi is upwards of sixty miles, and I shall be to-morrow night at Bourbon. In short, every thing concurs to make me adopt this plan; and I am persuaded that if you were here, you would yourself say, "Go to Bourbon, Providence orders you." I go then with pleasure, and even with confidence. If I had consulted M. Fagon, he would have sent me there; to no more on the subject. Nothing can exceed the affectionate attentions of the duchess de Chaulnes towards me; she says nothing, but I can plainly perceive the satisfaction she feels in our being together.

I do not wonder that you are pleased with Savigny *, it is certainly a most delightful situation. If there are any letters from you at Moulins, they will be forwarded to Bourbon. I am impatient to have news of the king's health, and M. de Grignan's, and his and your affairs; nothing can divert my thoughts from these subjects. I wish you had informed my son of the route the duke de Chaulnes has taken, that he might have met him at Fougeres. Pray inform M. and madame de Coulanges how matters stand with me; I cannot doubt the interest they take in my welfare.

Adieu, my lovely; I am wholly occupied with your affection and solicitude for my health.

LETTER DCCLXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Bourbon, Monday, September 22, 1687.

We arrived here last night from Nevers, from whence I wrote to you. It is true, my child, that we came in a day, as we were told we should; but what a day! what ten leagues! we were travelling from day-break till night, without taking more than two hours rest at dinner-time, through an incessant rain, and the most execrable roads that ever were seen; and we were frequently obliged to walk on foot, for fear of being overturned into frightful sloughs: all this too after five of the most delightful days in the world, lighted and warmed by the charming rays of the sun, and passing over roads like gravel walks; but here we are in quite another climate, a low country, covered with woods, like Britany. We were received on our arrival by madame

* A seat about twelve miles from Paris, that belonged to the marquis de Vins.

Ferret, of Britany, and are lodged in the same apartments madame de Montespan, madame d'Urez, and madame de Louvois have occupied. We slept well, and this morning we went to mass at the capuchins, and received the compliments of madame de Fourci, madame de Nangis, and mademoiselle d'Armentieres. We have a physician to attend us, whom I much approve; it is Amiot, who is very well acquainted with, and expresses great esteem for, Alliot, and admires our good Jacob, with whom he was in close attendance for six months, at M. de Sully's, where that nobleman was confined with the disorder which put an end to his life. Madame de Verneuil had recommended this physician to me, but I had forgotten it; pray let madame de Sully and M. de Coulanges know this: Amiot is an intimate friend of the latter; he had likewise the care of madame de Louvois. He seems to dislike excessive bleeding, and approves the method of our capuchins; he assures me, that all my little complaints arise from the spleen, and that the waters of Bourbon are sovereign in those cases. He is a great advocate for the waters of Vichi; but he says I shall find as much benefit from the use of these. His laxatives are the gentlest imaginable. He is of Alliot's opinion, that pumping is rather too violent a remedy, and more likely to injure the nerves than to do them good; and thinks moderate purgatives, with the warm bath, and the use of the waters internally, will be sufficient for me. He talks very sensibly; he will manage me with great care and circumspection, and will give you a faithful account of his progress. As he is about to settle at Paris, you may suppose he would not willingly take with him the ill word of this country. Madame de Chaulnes' disorder is by no means to be neglected, these waters will do her service: we have

very comfortable lodgings, and near each other; but as for the place itself, one may say of it,

Qu'il n'eut jamais du ciel un regard amoureux.*

But Providence seems to have conducted me hither by the hand. I always consult you in my own mind, and you are of opinion, I am sure, that I could not have taken a more proper step. Good heavens, how weary I am of thus perpetually talking of myself! But you will have it so. I shall, however, change the subject from me to you.

I have received your letter of Thursday the 18th, by which I find, my beloved child, that you are going to Versailles; I perceive also what stops M. de Grignan at this juncture. You may believe, I am not so ridiculously occupied with myself, as to neglect, even for an instant, thinking of you, and all that relates to you. This is an habitual thought; a fund that my heart is never without; and as there is much to think of, I think much—but often, alas! to little purpose. I want much to know how M. de Grignan does, and how you yourself are; I am frightened to death, lest you should be infected by any of the fevers that are so prevalent at Versailles, where, I am told, hardly a house is free. Heaven preserve my dearest child! I embrace the marquis; give one remembrance from me to M. and madame de Coulanges; if they want to learn any thing respecting me, they well know of whom to inquire. I am not ignorant that madame de Coulanges is going to settle at Brevannes; what pleasure it is to live in the country! I shall enjoy it in perfection when I get from hence.

It would surprise you to see the care madame de

* That Heaven never enriched it with a smile.

Chaulnes takes of me; she sends you a thousand compliments, and talks of you continually; the expression of "the beautiful countess" comes naturally to her; in short, you are always present to us. I thank you, my dearest, for your vegetable salt, and shall make use of it; you are very good to be thus mindful of your poor mamma! It is not often that mothers meet with such sweet attentions; on the other hand, I believe it is as rare to find a daughter so much beloved by a mother as you are by me; but, be this as it may, you make me infinitely happy, and I ought to suffer patiently the little sorrows that are attendant upon such an affection as mine.

LETTER DCCLXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Bourbon, Thursday, September 25, 1687.

I HAVE received your letter of Monday the 22d, which gave me no small relief, my beloved child, by informing me of the excellent and prudent resolutions you have adopted in regard to the approaching winter. I can easily conceive that you will have business enough upon your hands, but you will have a good lawyer and an excellent host. I wish he may not supplant me; this winter will be the reverse of the last to you: it would be difficult indeed always to support the expense, but if you could, it would be a great pleasure: for my part, I cannot imagine how a person can bear to be a dead weight upon his friends; I am sure, were it in my power, I would be the first to set the contrary example. I acknowledge that his majesty has been very gracious and condescending; but I had rather have heard something better. God must direct all; you have prevented

me from making any complaint, by putting me in mind of whom I complain. The bark has performed its usual miracles with respect to the king's disorder. Madame de Rochefort has informed madame de Nangis of the duke of Burgundy's illness, for which she appears extremely concerned.

You desire to know how things go with me. As well, my dear, as can be wished. I have now taken the waters two days; they sit very lightly and easily upon my stomach; they made me a little giddy indeed the first day, but it is gone off; if they continue to agree with me, I shall make no use of those of Vichi, which are sent here in four and twenty hours. Never was there so perfect a union between two rivals: they are heated in the hottest well here, and are drank mixed with the others. Thus the waters of Bourbon receive the waters of Vichi into their bosom, and impart to them the same degree of warmth: the latter are quite at home. Madame de Chaulnes and I are the most healthy patients in the place. Poor madame de Nangis is really to be pitied; her attacks of colic are so violent, that they often throw her into convulsions. Mademoiselle d'Armentieres is in so weak a way, that she seems at death's door. Madame de Fourcy is just come from Vichi, to complete her cure, as she says, in this place; and how do you think she does this? By sleeping three hours every day after dinner, during which time her legs become as limp as a rag; when she wakes, she cannot stand upon them for another hour at least. In this manner she goes on day after day, and seems so perfectly satisfied, that her situation is, on that account, the more pitiable. The brother of your Berthelot is indeed in a deplorable way; he is sunk into a lethargy, the remains of a dreadful fit of apoplexy. It is one of

the most disagreeable things of this place to have nothing but miserable objects before our eyes: the baths cure some, but have no effect on others. However, I have received so much benefit that I have no reason to regret coming to a place where I am the happiest person in it. Madame de Chaulnes is nearly on a par with me; nothing can exceed her attentions to me; she really seems to be more anxious about my health than her own; she has sent for water from Vichi, merely because she was the occasion of my not going thither; so that I may either take it or not, as I please: in my opinion, the waters here are much preferable, at least so all the physicians of this place say; but we shall see. It is certain, that those who have taken them are full as well as they were at Vichi; especially madame Bel***: ask the Colberts about this woman; her adventures and misfortunes are truly pitiable. Be not uneasy about me, my dear countess; Amiot is not a little proud of having the duchess and me for his patients, and hopes to gain credit by us this winter.

I heartily embrace M. de Grignan; all his concerns are mine; I find myself attached to you and to him by a thousand ties. I grieve at the miserable situation the poor chevalier is in. My dear marquis, I love you dearly. Again I turn to you, my amiable child; but I need not say what my feelings are towards you: you know them well.

LETTER DCCLXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Bourbon, Saturday, September 27, 1687.

THERE are certain hours which we can devote to writing in this place, and this is one of them. I received yours with all the joy and emotion you are so well acquainted with; for it is certain that you love me. There is a young lady in this place, who pretends to love her mother, and who says and does many agreeable things to prove it, but she is a hundred steps behind you; this lady is madame de Nangis*.

We have many cripples here, and other poor souls at death's door, who seek relief in the scalding waters of the wells; some miss, others find it; the majority of the afflicted have apoplexy, or the remains of apoplexy: it is this that kills. I have sent for the Vichi waters, as M. de Fagon's wife and many others have done; they are heated in a manner that pleases me; they have the same taste, and nearly the same strength, as at Vichi; they answer their purpose fully, as I experienced with pleasure this morning. I shall continue them for a week, by Alliot's † advice, and shall not be pumped by Amiot's ‡ direction, who assigned his reasons to you. When you have read his magic, by which you will not be the wiser, you may send it to Alliot; in the mean time I shall proceed in the way I have hitherto done. On Saturday I shall resume the waters of this place, and indulge myself in its agreeable baths: Amiot proposes to heat the water to a degree sufficient to make

* Daughter of madame de Rochefort.

† The physician madame de Sévigné had consulted at Paris.

‡ The physician who had the care of her at Bourbon.

me perspire moderately. For my part, I leave every cock master of his own dunghill, not doubting that a man of his experience must know what is best for me. I wish you would write a line or two, expressing the good opinion you have of his skill; and let me entreat you not to be uneasy, for you may expect to see me in a few days perfectly well.

It is my earnest prayer to heaven to preserve M. de Grignan and you, and to increase the chevalier's stock of patience. You also seem to stand in need of a considerable portion, to undergo all that has happened to you; and if one dared to think at Bourbon, the idea would be overwhelming: but here we are mere automatons; our ill-organised machines receive and pay visits; but we give up all pretensions to having souls, as such companions would be very troublesome to us while we are taking the waters; we shall find our souls again, when we get to Paris.

You keep up so obligingly all the correspondence with our friends, that I need not desire you to remember poor Corbinelli now and then, and to love him as well as you know I love him; I heartily wish him that happiness; it is the greatest, I think, that can happen to him. Madame de Chaulnes enters my room: she scolds me, she cannot tell why, and "embraces her charming countess." All Bourbon is employed in writing to-day, to-morrow all Bourbon will be employed in a different manner. It is a kind of convent. You talk of the dews, my child—where are we to find them? We ought to have a little good air, for there are no dinners, no suppers, no merry-makings; however, I hope to make amends for this in the winter, in our own charming inn.

LETTER DCCLXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Bourbon, Tuesday, October 7, 1687.

So, you take it in your head to scold me, my dear countess, instead of giving me joy of being better than I ever was in my life, and of having saved myself the trouble of a journey to Vichi! Have I not sent for the waters from that place? Have they not had the desired effect of gently evacuating the humours? I no longer stand in need of the violent operations that were necessary some years ago. M. Mansard is here, to breathe a little, after the violent evacuations he experienced at Vichi; many others are come hither from thence for the same purpose. However, during the week that I took the Vichi waters, I found benefit from them; but then I had recourse to the Bourbon waters afterwards, to calm and comfort me. It is an universally received opinion in this place, that where there are no great quantity of humours to evacuate, the waters of Bourbon are of a mild and sanative quality, which cannot fail of restoring a weak constitution; they convey a balsamic nourishment through the whole system. As to the country, I do not pretend to place it in competition with Vichi; it would be to compare a little Paradise with almost infernal regions. But, in short, I have taken the waters of Vichi for a week, and those of Bourbon as long; in the intervals I have used de Lorme's powder, and find myself perfectly well; I have not the least appearance of vapours; I look well, and feel well. If there was any necessity of being pumped, Amiot, I am sure, would not have spared me. You are angry with me also for writing; my dear child,

it is one of my greatest pleasures, and I should die without this amusement; every body in this place writes: I scribbled half a dozen lines indeed to madame de la Fayette; but do you call that writing?

The weather here is now delightful. I rejoice to find that the chevalier is well enough to join us in the last melancholy farewell to Livri; it was all I desired, either to see you settled there, or at least able to go there. We shall be in Paris by the 19th of this month, according to our present plan; I shall embrace there madame de la Fayette, and madame de Lavardin, and then be off to meet my dear child, to breathe the fresh air of Livri, and stretch my legs a little: this will put the finishing-hand to the benefit I have received from the waters.

If you return to Paris to receive me, you know it would give me infinite pleasure; but do not fatigue yourself by coming too far; let us only meet again, and we will pass all the time together that our destiny will permit. But I dare not reckon too much upon any schemes that please me, lest Providence should have ordained otherwise; yet there are certain things, I think, which must happen of course. I hope my friend Corbinelli will come to us at Livri; we will make the most of these last moments, till some one comes and turns us out by the shoulders*.

How can you suppose that writing to you can fatigue me? on the contrary, it is a great relief and comfort to me; it is my only delight. Make my most affectionate compliments to the chevalier; would to God he were as well as I am! Madame de Chaulnes has already taken her measures for setting out for Chaulnes, in three days after she returns to Paris. This is the natural effect of

* The abbey of Livri had been vacant from the 23d of August, by the death of the abbé de Coulanges, madame de Sévigné's uncle.

the life we lead here, every person wishes to fly into the country for rest. Madame de Nangis is already gone to a seat of her husband's, about nine leagues from hence.

You talk of the baths of Vichi, they are nothing; those of Bourbon are far superior to them, and are indeed admirable for the gout, and a thousand other disorders. For my part, I am very well pleased with my journey; I know the bottom of the sack; my apprehensions were much greater than my maladies. If you love me, and are pleased with the care that is taken of me, how will you be able to repay the friendly attention of the duchess de Chaulnes?

LETTER DCCLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Bourbon, Thursday, October 9, 1687.

You were in a very ill humour with me, my child, when last you wrote to me; I know the source from whence it sprung, and I am sensible how much you love me; but really, the injustice of your accusation makes me out of humour in my turn. You and madame de la Fayette join in blaming me for not having quitted madame de Chaulnes at Nevers. In answer to this, I have to tell you, in the first place, that it was not her fault that I did not do so; but I affirm, that I never took a better step than the one you blame: in the second place, I do not stand so much in need of the waters of Vichi as I formerly did; I have made all the use of them that was necessary, by mixing them with those of Bourbon. I have had the benefit of the most delightful baths imaginable; and, in short, I have gone through the whole course of medicines that were proper for me,

with an ease and regularity that I could never have done had not madame de Chaulnes been with me. We shall set out from hence on Monday, after having made a stay of three weeks and a day; during which time we have drank the waters sixteen days, bathed nine times, taken medicine three, and two days we rested. I defy any thing to be better conducted than all this; my friend shows a regard and care of me almost equal to yours; she is entitled to the most grateful acknowledgments; and yet you consider her as having overturned the whole plan of my cure. For heaven's sake, my child, adopt an opinion more consistent with justice and the love you bear me; and when we meet at Essonne, if you intend to meet us there, let there be nothing but joy to see us in such good health, and gratitude to the good duchess.

We shall take two days to go from hence to Nevers, that we may not fatigue ourselves; Wednesday we shall leave Nevers, and the fifth day, which will be Sunday the 19th, we shall dine at Essonne, and sleep at Paris. I should be sorry to occasion you any trouble or fatigue, otherwise you may judge whether we should give you a hearty reception if you were to meet us at Essonne to dinner.

Amiot writes to you by this post; he is an excellent physician; and there is a little apothecary in this place, who is prudence, capacity, and experience itself; both concurred in assuring me there was no occasion for the pump; they feared it would disorder the system too much, and put the nerves in mind of something they were not at present thinking of. In short, they are justly held in the highest esteem by every one here, persons who have honesty enough to condemn what they think is not right, even though they themselves by mistake may have first prescribed it.

You say I write to all the world: I write to no o

but you, my dear child; for I do not call it writing, to send two short notes to madame de la Fayette, and four lines in answer to madame de Coulanges. But a word of the weather: it is a kind of enchantment; it is as if you had made it yourself on purpose for me; it is as warm as Midsummer; this will make you love poor Livri: I hope you are there; the very idea gives me pleasure. If you will wait for me there, and only send me your carriage, I will be with you in an instant from Paris. If you come to Paris to meet me, it will be a different thing; or you may come only half-way between Paris and Essonne: in short, do what you think will occasion you the least fatigue: however, if you should resolve to go as far as Essonne, do not travel fourteen leagues in a day; but sleep on Saturday night at Savigny, and on Sunday you may easily be at Essonne to dinner.

Madame de Chaulnes desires me to make you a thousand compliments in her name, which you are to consider as real expressions of friendship: she has nothing so much at heart, as to give a good account of your poor mumma. We have heard a thousand stories of Britany that have diverted us extremely; but our chief pleasure is, that we shall set out on Monday, after having observed punctually all the ceremonial of Bourbon.

LETTER DCCLXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Milli, Saturday night, October 18, 1687.

I HAVE received your letter, and find it full of love and remembrance. I wrote to you from the Red House, about six leagues from hence, by which you will find

that there would have been some difficulty in getting madame de Chaulnes to have taken Fontainbleau in our way, because there are so many persons of her acquaintance there, that it would have been impossible for her to have concealed herself. But I should have seen there all I wished to see*. I am so well, and my spirits and health are on such good terms, that I see no reason why you should not love me. Our journey has been a mere airing, we have experienced no inconvenience. But you say not a word of Livri: cruel creature! to deny me that pleasure. I will wait for you till Monday, since you wish it; I would willingly make you much greater sacrifices, otherwise I should have been glad to have seen my two good friends (La Fayette and Lavardin), and to have set out immediately afterwards for Livri; but this I shall not now think of, but wait with the utmost eagerness to embrace you. If you were to be as expeditious as ourselves, I should not wait long. I hope you will send La Brie back to me to-morrow to Essonne. Adieu, my dearest! I am rejoiced that you are likely to settle all your affairs, and make your *court* by continuing *at court*. Madame de Chaulnes embraces you, and exults not a little in the excellent state of health in which she shall restore me to you. Embrace madame de Vins for me, but do not suffer her to steal your heart, though it would be pardonable if you did.

[N. B. *The mother and daughter were not separated a little from each other till the beginning of October*, 1688.]

* Madame de Grignan was then at Fontainbleau with the court

LETTER * DCCLXXVII.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

October 24, 1687.

Your letter, my dear *reprobate*, has given me very great pleasure: I have read it again and again with attention; and have found in it the epistolary eloquence, which charms every one by whom it is understood. Now I pretend to be one of the very best judges of this style; and if my practice kept pace with my theory, I would defy you, and Cicero, and Pascal, and Voiture, and every one else. Be assured, my silence does not spring from forgetfulness; I am generally plunged in the first, but always free from the second. I talk of you when and as often as I can; this phrase is not correct; it ought to be—as you express it. I assert, that you have more wit than all Languedoc together, even when the states are assembled there. I said this, two days ago, to your first president, Nicolai; who desired me to request you to bespeak him a dozen bottles of thyme water, convinced you would willingly take this trouble on his account. La Faveur will prepare it, and the price is no object; at least, you have only to send me the bill.

You ask me in what study I am engaged; to which I answer, that having read a considerable portion of history, and a good many books of modern politics, I have found something to amuse me in the propositions of Molinos, and as I have been assured they are conformable to the sentiments of St. Theresa and other mystics, I have read the Château de l'Ame, and the rest of this author's works, in which I have indeed found all the doctrines of the aforesaid heretic. I intend to read

shortly, *le Chrêtien intericur* (the inward Christian), by a recluse, published by Bernières, treasurer of France, at Caen. If you ask, of what use the study of this mystical theology can be to me, I shall not be able to inform you; but I defy all the directors to know as much of the subject as myself, or to understand better the folds of the heart, as it relates to Christian holiness. I would rather, however, study the feudal laws with you, though you judges form your statutes upon very doubtful principles, and always take it for granted, with respect to revenues, "that there is no manor without a lord." To which we may oppose, that there is no servitude without a title: it is for the plaintiff to prove this; is it true or false? as you please, Judge Feudal.

Yes, M. de Vardes has told me what he did for you, or rather for himself, knowing that the person who acts for you has always the profit. The court monopolizes him; he is a great personage there: he is a free courtier, whom the master treats well, and to whom he always talks, and there is no parade or affectation on either side. Adieu; I do what I can to prevent madame de Sévigné from writing to you, but alas! my efforts are ineffectual. Pray tell me if you think the final letter of a word should be pronounced before a word beginning with a vowel, in poetry; as when we say, "Il faut *aimer*, mais *aimer* autrement:" we are very much divided here upon this question*. Adieu,

* This question of prosody is not without its difficulties, even in the present day.

In conversation, where affectation is particularly avoided, the *r* in the word *aimer*, when it precedes a word beginning by a consonant, is sounded: in this case, no doubt, it ought to be pronounced like

But in an argumentative or declamatory speech, either at the bar or in the theatre, I think the *r* should be articulated, as well before a consonant as a vowel. The author of an article of grammar in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* of the present year (1806), No. 19, is of a different

my dear *reprobate:* while I live I will not forget you, and for what more can I answer? My compliments to your family.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

It is not he who has prevented me from writing; so put your little Rambouillet sword again into its scabbard. Here follows, sir, a long list of reasons, good or bad. First, I well remember that I wrote to you last, and that you neglected me, and made me pine for your answer; I had afterwards the grief of seeing my dear uncle, the abbé de Coulanges, decline, and at length expire, whom I had so many reasons to love, who was my father and my benefactor, to whom I owed all the quiet and happiness of my life, by the attentions he paid to my affairs. I have bitterly lamented him, and shall lament him as long as I live; and not only him, but the abbey, the charming abbey, to which I took you, which occasioned you to make so pretty a couplet on the road, and where my son entertained us so highly, by the enthusiasm with which he repeated to us a whole scene from Mithridates, with proper tones and gestures, seated on a throne of turf in a little wood, and so surprised our weak minds, that you thought you were at the theatre when you least expected it.

nion. The sensible pronunciation of the r in these cases, appears to him an affectation of the stage. It is possible that some may sound this letter too harshly. But this abuse proves nothing against the principle, which is important. It tends to render the phrase perspicuous, by distinguishing the infinitive from the participle, an essential advantage when the speaker is in a large room, and addressing a numerous audience. It is also of consequence to harmony, by introducing another sonorous final in a language which has but too many silent syllables. Many persons affirm, and I am one of them, that Le Kain could give force to these final letters without cacophony or pedantry. This theatrical tradition is true; but taste must regulate practice.

A month after the death of this dear uncle, I resolved to go to Bourbon, which I had deferred doing, from the fear of leaving him. I took this journey in company with the duchess de Chaulnes, and was cured of the apprehension that I had a certain disorder called the vapours, which I believed of consequence, and was told it was not so; true or false, I am satisfied, and I do not repent my journey. I have been returned these six days, and my daughter tells me, that you wrote in my absence to rouse me: well, my dear sir, I am roused. I am told also, for it is hearsay only, madame de Grignan having taken care to lose your letter, that you have a maxim, that it is easier to separate ourselves from the world, than to reconcile our hearts to the forgetfulness of our friends. Is this your opinion? If it is, I have ample scope to encourage you; for I can say seriously, that of all men in the world, you are the one whom I forget the least. When you are known, and the charms of your mind, and the goodness of your heart, are appreciated, it is not easy to efface you; you make a lasting impression. I speak of you whenever an opportunity offers, and your rival is always disposed to hear me. I talk of you also to others, in season and out of season: in short, sir, remove from your vexations, that of believing it is easy to forget you; tell your maxim that its reflection is no longer capable of humiliating you, and that I still feel towards you as I have always felt, and shall feel for you in the same manner all the rest of my life.

LETTER * DCCLXXVIII.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, November 5, 1687.

I HAVE been very uneasy about you, my dear cousin, since our friend informed me you were gone to Bourbon. I should have expressed my uneasiness sooner, if I had not intended to go to Fontainbleau, and from thence to Paris, for the sole purpose of seeing you. But a bad cold has spoiled my plan; for though I am now nearly well, the season is not favourable for travelling, with the remains still upon me of my indisposition. This induces me to entreat you to let me hear from you. If your disorder be a rheumatism in the right arm, which was attacked eight or ten years ago, desire our friend to write for you. I have always loved you, my dear cousin; our little quarrels have even been a proof that you were not indifferent to me: but I have never loved or esteemed you so much as I do at present. What makes me know this is, that I tremble more at the apprehension of losing you, than I used to do. What could I do in the world without you, my poor dear cousin? In whom could I have so full a confidence of being beloved? With whom could I laugh? With whom could I display my wit? To whom could I talk so unreservedly upon so many subjects? For the beautiful Magdelonne, though one of my friends, is not you, and could not supply your place to me. Her husband and family occupy her whole heart and mind. I should only have your niece, and our friend, left; and, far from comforting me under the loss, they would make me remember and regret you still more. Be careful of yourself, therefore, my dear cousin, and join to your

own interest, the consideration of the happiness of madame de Grignan, and of us, your best friends. I have had philosophy enough to dispense with the honours and establishments I believed to be my due; but I should not have a sufficient stock to be able to dispense with you: nothing but pure Christianity would serve me in any stead.

LETTER * DCCLXXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, November 13, 1687.

I HAVE just received from you, my dear cousin, the most delightful and affectionate letter possible. I have never seen friendship expressed so naturally, and in a manner so calculated to carry conviction with it. And it has had its effect: I believe my life necessary to the preservation of yours. I will give you, therefore, an account of it, to cheer you, and that you may understand exactly the state of my health.

I go back to the last days of my dear uncle the abbé, to whom you well know I was under infinite obligations. It was to him I owed the comfort and happiness of my life; it is to him you owe the pleasure you have experienced in my society: but for him, we should never have laughed together; you are indebted to him for all my gaiety, my good humour, sprightliness, the gift of understanding you, the intelligence which ma me comprehend what you had said, and guess wh you were going to say: in short, the good abbé, extricating me from the abyss in which I was left the death of M. de Sévigné, made me what I was, wh you have seen me, and worthy your friendship and esteem. I draw a veil over your wrongs; they a

great, but I must forget them, and tell you how keenly I have felt the loss of this agreeable source of all the happiness of my life. He died after a fever of seven days, like a young man, with sentiments of piety that affected me; for God has given me principles of religion which have made me view properly this last scene of life. His had lasted for eighty years; he lived in honour, and died a Christian: God grant that we may do the same. It was at the end of August that I wept his loss. I should never have quitted him, had he lived as long as I may live. But finding myself too much at liberty about the middle of September, I resolved to go to Vichi, to cure my imagination at least, of a sort of convulsions in my left hand, and of visionary vapours, which made me apprehensive of apoplexy. This projected journey gave the duchess de Chaulnes the desire of taking it at the same time. I joined her; and as I had a wish to return to Bourbon, I did not leave her: I sent for a quantity of the Vichi waters, which, heated in the well at Bourbon, are admirable. I drank some of these, and then some of the Bourbon waters, which made an excellent mixture. The two rivals are reconciled to each other: they have but one heart and one soul: Vichi reposes on the bosom of Bourbon, and warms herself by its fire-side, that is, in the bubblings of its fountain. I have been so well, that when I asked to use the pump it was denied me, on the plea that my health did not require it: the doctors laughed at my complaints, treated them as visionary, and sent me back as a person in perfect health. They so positively assured me of this, that I have believed it, and I consider myself to-day as upon this footing. My daughter is delighted at it; you know how she loves me.

Such, my dear cousin, is my situation. As your health depends on mine, here is salutary provision for

you. Be careful of your cold, and, in the same manner, make me continue well. We must go on together, and not forsake each other. I returned from Bourbon three weeks ago; our pretty little abbey was not then disposed of; we spent twelve days there: at length it has been given to the old bishop of Nimes, a very worthy prelate. I left it three days ago, painfully affected at bidding adieu for ever to this delightful retreat, to which I was so much attached: after weeping for the resident, I wept for the residence.

I know you wrote to me during my journey to Bourbon; I have not wasted my time in answering you, but have given the reins to the temptation of talking of myself, without curb or limitation. I ask your pardon, and assure you that I will not indulge so much in this liberty another time; for I know, and it is Solomon who says it, that "he who talketh much of himself is despised." Our friend Corbinelli says, that to judge how much we weary others by talking of ourselves, we have only to recollect how much others, by talking of themselves, weary us. This rule is general enough; but I think I can find an exception to it to-day, for I should be glad if your pen were as inconsiderate as mine, and should be delighted if you would talk to me a great deal of yourself. It is this feeling that has induced me to enter into so terrific an account: and, in confidence of the same feeling on your part, I shall make no apologies; but embrace you, my dear cousin, and you, my dear Coligny. I return madame de Bussy a thousand thanks for her remembrance: it would be easier to kill me, than to make me write a word more.

LETTER *DCCLXXX.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Monday, November 24, 1687.

I SHOULD have answered your letter, my friend, three posts ago, if an opportunity had offered of communicating your wishes to the first president of accounts: but he was in the country, and afterwards at Versailles: at last, I have told him of your intention to make him a present of twelve bottles of thyme-water, to which he would not at first agree; but as I represented to him, that he might repay you this gift by another, if I could prevail on you to accept it, he consented, and will receive the case, his valet having taken the letter of directions for that purpose. I doubt whether the case be arrived; be that as it may, I will be your second agent in this affair till the business be completed, and in the interim, you will take possession of his friendship, as he does of yours. I have told him you were one of his father's friends, and one of the best friends of M. de Vardes, which gives you a new claim with him. He took me to the admission of a master of accounts, who is a relation of mine, and I heard the law, *Desiderium meum rationibus tuis non congruet*, &c. attacked and defended. The question of the deposit was agitated, and your first president argued admirably. I tell you all this as I go along, to remind you, that I am still passionately attached to jurisprudence; but this attachment has not prevented me from reading the works of St. Theresa, in which I think I have found all the opinions of Molinos. I have made a collection of the Christian or mystical maxims of this saint; I have con-

ferred with very learned Cartesians upon the subject, who all believe that equivocal meanings, which tend in the least degree towards paradoxy, occasion their authors to be burned, according as their judges are more or less ignorant: now we hold for certain, that those who compose the tribunal of the Inquisition, are so in the superlative degree. Cardinal Petrucci is in waiting for them, and he may wait long enough, for they dare not attack him, because he has sense and learning, added to high rank. I shall read two or three mystics, after I have finished the Inward Christian. All this, my friend, does not advance me one step in devotion; on the contrary, it rather sends me farther back: the distinctions of vocal orisons, mental orisons, meditation, union, and quietude, only serve to bewilder the mind, and, in the end, mean only more or less attention to prayer, and more or less charity, which I knew before. But it is not science which inspires devotion; it is only the grace of God. Adieu, my friend; my jealousy is continually increasing: I embrace you cordially.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I NEVER met with such rivals; I think we may say of them, as of the two knights-errant: *O gran bontà de cavalieri antichi* *. I ask your pardon for the last word (ancient); but your harmony called forth this application.

I have received your last letter, sir; it pleases me, as every thing does that comes from your pen. I have talked of you to M. de la Trousse: the relish he has for your society, raises him considerably in my esteem. We should not be cousins, if he did not feel all the charms and solidity of your merit; he appears to me

* O wonderful excellence of the ancient knights!

fully sensible of it, but I fancy I should derive greater benefit than he, if Providence had placed me within the reach of profiting by it; alas! there is a great gulf between us. If those who are erecting these courts of justice had been always as they are now, they would not have swallowed so many snakes in this country, which have been so unwholesome, that it was afterwards necessary to swallow an equal quantity of Jesuit's bark*. Another of the same species has had the same blow; it is well bestowed: these are strange lights to put upon the bushel; they should be put under it, that we might be ignorant of all their actions: *ma taci* (but be silent), I entreat, for I do not wish to create myself such enemies. In short, when I see M. de Vardes, instead of thanking him, I know I shall congratulate him, on the honour he has done himself, and the pleasure he has experienced, to be able, on so fortunate an occasion, to render justice to such a friend as you: ours appears to me immersed in speculative devotion. I always hope that in playing thus with it, it will some day seize him in good earnest, and that he will be ensnared in his meditations, as a bird in birdlime. It is certain that the world, and all that passes in it, seems unworthy his attention, and that he spends his life in pious reflections, and the exercise of charity to his neighbour. It still seems to me as if God would make something extraordinary of him in the end. It is continually in my head to address God in the words of Polieucte, speaking of Paulina's soul:

> Seigneur, de vos bontés il faut que je l'obtienne;
> Elle a trop de vertu pour n'être pas Chretienne;
> Avec trop de merite il vous plut la former,
> Pour ne vous pas connoître, et ne vous pas aimer†.

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* She means M. de Vardes.

† Lord, let me obtain this favour from thy bounty; she has too

You, sir, seem to have grace of every kind, and particularly, it appears to me, the gift of perseverance, which is every thing, and makes your life as uniform as the true friendship we entertain for you.

LETTER * DCCLXXXI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, December 2, 1687.

I am delighted that I did not deceive myself in supposing my long letter would not tire you. The great interest you took in my health, and the blood which awakened me so much one day, in consequence of your having four pallets taken from your arm, without informing me of it, answered for you that my details would not displease you. I have been equally gratified with what you wrote to me. I have regretted the good father Rapin. I agree with you respecting his good qualities. The benevolence and mildness of his disposition, with a capacity which would have made any other man vain, were what attached me principally to him. He now receives the reward of his virtues. Father Bouhours, however, who was his intimate friend, and whom I always accused of having drank the blood of Rapin, who was paler than death, has taken courage, and has given us a very amusing book, which is read with pleasure: it is entitled, "La Maniere de bien penser dans les Ouvrages de l'Esprit†." I would have

much virtue, not to be a Christian; thou hast formed her with too much merit, not to know and to love thee.

† "How to think rightly of Works of Wit." Besides this work, which was then very useful, the close of the year 1687 produced three other books by three new authors. These were, Fontenelle's Eclogues, the Poetical Works of Madame Deshoulières, and particularly the Cha-

said *juger;* for this is precisely what he does. For this inquiry he collects all that has been written and admired in prose and in verse, sometimes praising, sometimes blaming. We are almost always of his opinion, but now and then we criticise his criticism. You may suppose, this book is very amusing. I concluded he would make mention of you: but I can find but one passage where he cites you as an example. I doubt not that this father has sent you the work. Our friend is highly entertained with it. All that decries unjust approbation, and treats of the accuracy of the understanding, is exactly calculated for him. I wish you perfect health. We are no longer young, my dear cousin; this is great pity. It seems to me, that we were heretofore more animated than the rest of the world, and that few persons were superior to us. I include our Corbinelli; for though his wit be still as good, and as lively, as at that period, he knows in his conscience that he cannot enjoy it so agreeably as he has done. Are you at Autun? Is your bishop there? if he is, tell him I was so sure he would be here after Martinmas, that I have not answered a very charming letter he has written me on the death of my poor abbé. Dispose him to forgive me, by assuring him that I expect him here with great impatience. You cannot suppose that I am less impatient to see you again in health and spirits, for this is the *tu autem*, and to talk to you on a thousand things which cannot be written. I embrace you, and the amiable Coligny, provided you receive the sincere regards of the beautiful countess.

racters of La Bruyere. The success of the latter was well known: malignity decried it; time has sanctioned it. Few writers have been so well appreciated as La Bruyere, in the excellent account of him by M. Suard.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

FATHER Bouhours would perhaps have done as well to have quoted fragments of your letters, and those of madame de Sévigné, by way of examples of the propriety, delicacy, or noble simplicity of ideas, as of Balsac's and Voiture's. We will meet some day at M. de Lamoignon's to tell him our opinion, and that of the public, respecting his book; but the judgement of what is called the world in general, is commonly very insipid and very unpolished in this age, in which fine or good things are not understood, and in which there is no time for any thing but calculations and attention to business. Misery suppresses wit; we are too much occupied with our wants, to attend to pretty things.

The same father has lent me a book that has been written at Rome against the Quietists: the original is in Italian; and this is a good, easy, noble, and pleasing translation by father B****. He combats the doctrine of one Molinos, the founder of the sect of these Quietists †.

† It was in the same year, 1687, that the Spanish priest, Molinos, condemned at Rome by the inquisition, had there publicly abjured his heresies. This abjuration was only for the public. It neither changed his fate nor his opinions. He was taken back to his dungeon, and, on entering it, he appealed from his sentence to the last decision. His system, or rather his reveries, were of the same kind as those of the ancient Gnostics. Quietism, which a few years afterward furnished the jealous hatred of Bossuet with new means of oppressing Fenelon, passed for an emanation of Molinosism. It is worthy of remark, that St. Theresa had been allotted a place in heaven, for a mysticism similar to that which conveyed La Guyon to the tower of Vincennes; and that at the same time the doctors of Salamanca pretended to beatify Marie d'Agréda, whom the doctors of Paris anathemised, and both on account of the same visionary notions. Some absurdities, like some truths, have the same good or ill fortune attending them in the world.

But to return to the book, How to think rightly of Works of Wit, I must tell you, that the public opinion will neither prejudice nor seduce me, for I know that its opinions are generally the result either of envy or of ignorance. My compliments, if you please, to madame de Coligny. I met madame de Montataire the other day, with whom I laughed heartily. Madame de Sévigné says, that our ages are incompatible with mirth: I think she is wrong; there are different kinds of mirth. Ours at present is more solid than the mirth of our youth; and I am convinced, with Epicurus, that judgement is necessary to the enjoyment of pleasure. I even maintain that it is essential to voluptuousness. This subject is curious, choice, and useful; but, after all, there is no true pleasure but in the love of God; upon which I shall say, by the bye, that scarcely one of those who have written the most diffusively upon the subject, knows what this love means.

LETTER *DCCLXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, June 15, 1688.

We knew not what had become of you, my dear cousin. Corbinelli and I said: If it were any other person, we should fear he had hanged himself; but we cannot believe so fatal a thing of one of your disposition. At length, we have found you again, and in the best health possible. Ah! this is a great blessing, my dear cousin; and how well you describe it, when you say, it is one without which we are indifferent to all others! Preserve it, then, as carefully as you can; it is one in which fortune has no share, and which makes us endure all the evils she can inflict. I own that the grace

of God is a very good staff: you are ably supported, therefore; those who appear the happiest, are not always the most so in reality. In short, our machines are strangely fragile, and the part the soul takes in our good or bad dispositions is no less strange. That of our countess de Provence is very much agitated by the commencement of the solicitations. All the Grignans are arrived from every quarter to second her. Still she is sensible to your remembrance and esteem; and sends you and my niece de Coligny a thousand kind remembrances in return.

I must say two words, my dear niece, to you. I see plainly, that you are running away with my cousin, to take him to the old family-seat of Coligny. I could wish to read there the history of the admiral and the other great personages, to admire their merit and modesty, in comparison with the ostentation of the present age. I can easily conceive, my dear cousin, the attachment you have to Chaseu. It has natural beauties which you would sell very dear, if they could be disposed of.

The duke de Valentinois has espoused mademoiselle d'Armagnac. My daughter is returned, charmed with the beauty of the spectacle; mademoiselle d'Armagnac, handsome, lovely, loaded with jewels, and her train borne by her sister, still more handsome, and younger than herself. All the beauty of the court was compressed into this family, for M. and madame d'Armagnac were also admirable in their kind.

Adieu, my dear relatives. If you see M. and madame de Toulonjon * again, you may with a safe conscience assure them of my delight at being remembered by them, and that I am their very humble servant.

* Madame de Toulonjon was Bussy's sister.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I have taken great interest, sir, in your perfect resignation to the decrees of Providence, and your letter has served to make me thoroughly understand the advantage of this conduct. Your example, joined to my own ideas, will confirm me more and more in my resolution to imitate you. There are situations where it is difficult not to repeat this so often reiterated verse:

La constance est d'un difficile usage *.

But we become accustomed to every thing. The longer I live, the more I find the paradox true, that all men are equally happy and miserable. It has been very useful to me since I have rightly understood it. To this end, I suppose a beggar, sixty years of age, to be in an hospital, with violent headaches, which seize him regularly every other day; that he is, besides, paralysed on one side, and subject to a nephritic colic. On the other hand, I suppose a king of the age of thirty, handsome, well-made, victorious in arms, and sound both in body and in mind; and I say that the beggar is as happy as the king, or, at least, that he is not more miserable. If this be true, as I believe it to be, no one should complain of his situation. Draw a comparison between the blessings and misfortunes of these two personages, their pleasures and their pains, and I am convinced you will be of my opinion.

I have lately translated two Greek orations from the Latin version, one of Isocrates, the other of Demosthenes, in order to judge of their eloquence by comparing them with the moderns: but I find there are perfections and defects every where, according to the taste of the age.

* Constancy is difficult to practise.

LETTER *DCCLXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, August 13, 1688.

I ALWAYS felt confidence, my dear cousin, in your happy disposition, and though I know some people who would have hanged themselves in the situation in which you left this place †, the past was in some degree a surety to me for the future. It seemed to me

> Qu'un mont pendant en precipices,
> Qui pour les coups du desespoir
> Sont aux malheureux si propices ‡,

was by no means the road you would take. And, indeed, you are right; life is short, and you are already far advanced: it is not worth while to be impatient. This consolation is melancholy, and the remedy worse than the disease; but it must produce its effect, as well as the idea, which is scarcely less enlivening, of the little room we occupy in the great universe, and of how little consequence it will be at the end of the world, whether there existed a count de Bussy happy or miserable. I know, that for the short period we are here, we could wish to be happy; but we ought to persuade ourselves that nothing is more impossible, and that if you had not to endure the mortifications you suffer at present, you would be obliged to submit to others which it might please Providence to inflict upon you. For instance, it is now his will that your German cousin should be romantically transplanted, and to appearance happily. But we have not a clear insight into things;

† It has been seen in the preceding Letter, that a cause Bussy had lost had reduced him to this situation.

‡ That a mountain hanging in precipices, so propitious to the unfortunate suffering from the wounds of despair.

and Providence has led us through such extraordinary roads, so distant from the point of guessing at the end of the romance, that we can draw no inference, and need not ascribe to ourselves any reproach. We must, therefore, return from whence we set out, and submit without a murmur to whatever it shall please God to do with us.

I know not how I have embarked in these moral reflections; I leave them, by saying, that the marquis de Villars* is returned from Germany, and tells us wonders of our cousin. I have to inform you that my daughter has gained her law-suit, costs and all, without a dissentient voice. This is remarkable. A great burthen is thus removed from the shoulders of the whole family: it was a persecuting dragon for six years; but to the dragon which is destroyed, another will succeed; which is the dragon of separation. Does not this exactly apply to what I said of the ways of Providence? My daughter and I must bid adieu, one for Provence, the other for Britany: for it is thus, apparently, that Providence is about to dispose of us. It has killed the niece of our Corbinelli in a strange way. She and her uncle had borrowed a friend's carriage: a man who had never driven, rashly harnessed young horses that had never been broken in: he mounted the box: they set off, dashing, rearing, tearing, beating every thing to pieces. One horse fell, the pole beat in the pannels of another carriage, from whence jumped three men with drawn swords: a mob collected; one of these men was on the point of running Corbinelli through the body: "Alas! gentlemen," said he, "you would gain nothing by it, the coachman does not belong to me, we are still

* This is the marshal Villars, of whom some interesting memoirs are still extant.

more vexed with him than you can be." This man then became his protector, and drew him from the populace, but he could not extricate his poor niece from the extreme alarm into which she had been thrown, and she returned home in such a state of agitation, that she was seized with a fever in the evening, and died four days afterwards. She has been generally lamented by those who knew her. The philosophy of our friend has not prevented him from weeping over her, but I hope, in the end, it will be the source of consolation to him. To that I commend him; for I have not the vanity to believe that, in an event of this nature, I can at all contribute to his comfort. I leave, however, the pen to him, my dear cousin, after having embraced you and my amiable niece with my whole heart; for I include her, as well as you, in this long, tiresome letter. I say tiresome, because, as it has not amused me in writing, I cannot suppose it will amuse you in reading. I should very much like to embrace dear little Langhac. My daughter sends you both a thousand kind remembrances; she prides herself on being grateful for the friendship and esteem you bear her. I can easily imagine, that if you were young, she would occupy the first place in your heart. I must return to you once more, to tell you how glad I am that you are pleased with the second volume of Abbadie*. You know how

* Abbadie, a Calvinistic priest, published at that time his *Traité de la Vérité de la Religion Chretienne* (Treatise on the Truth of the Christian Religion), admired even by the Catholics. It is well known that he afterwards wished to prove from the Revelations what he had established by argument. Voltaire has been blamed for having said, that by this last work he injured the first; "as if," says the critic, "Newton had injured his system by commenting on the Apocalypse!" But this commentary of Newton's was not made to prove attraction; and in spite of the critic, Voltaire's remark holds good.

I have extolled it as the most divine of books. This esteem is general; and the first who mentioned it to me in raptures was our dear friend. It is worthy of your and my niece's perusal. I think religion was never handled as it has been by this man.

LETTER * DCCLXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, August 26, 1689.

You will see, my dear cousin, by a long letter I wrote to you, and which I gave to my niece de Montataire to convey to you, that I did not fail to inform you of the complete victory my daughter has obtained over her opponents, without a dissentient voice, and all her costs paid. If I did not inform you of this quite as soon as I informed M. d'Autun, it is, that, having written to you a day after I wrote to him, we were played a trick of chicanery, which interrupted our joy in some degree, by the fear of not having our judgement signed before the breaking up of the parliament; but this evil being remedied, I wrote you a long letter, which you must now have received. You will not therefore be jealous of the prelate; and you will believe that no change has taken place in my heart, which can lead me to give him the preference to you. We wish to live amicably with Fortune, by forgiving her conduct towards you, in consideration of her kindness to your friends. There is always room for consolation, if we trace her whole conduct; for she often renders so many miserable, that we may say in the words of the opera:

Goûtons l'unique bien des cœurs infortunés,
Ne soyons pas seuls misérables †.

† Let us taste the only comfort of unfortunate hearts, let us not be the only persons who are wretched.

Those who are disposed to be patient, and to take comfort, find reasons every where, and this is, in reality, great wisdom; the contrary appears to me the height of folly, and deplorably useless. I am still charmed that you like Abbadie. Our friend was the first to pay him a tribute of esteem, and to yield to the force of his arguments. Next him, I wished you to be convinced, and you are so. This taste has been universal; but still it is a great advantage to us, and we owe this man a great obligation for having taken away our miserable doubts, and so ably answered a thousand objections which appeared strong; but every thing gave way before him. We are ashamed at not having thought all he has said; he informs and convinces us of the truth and holiness of a religion, which we had only considered superficially. I think you and my niece express yourselves extremely well on the subject of this excellent man; we have said the same things, though in a different way.

You know that the young Villars, son of Orondates, who is returned from Germany, where he has acted well both for his reputation in the German war, and the negociations in which he acquitted himself with credit, has had the promise of the office of commissary-general of your late cavalry. He gives fifty thousand crowns for it to the marquis de Montrevel. He sells his regiment for thirty thousand crowns to Blanchefort. Thus a man is placed in a situation where he will acquit himself well, at the eve of a war, which is now the public news. Troops are raised and sent into Germany. We are determined to begin, without waiting to be attacked. We are chagrined at the election of Liege, and at not having gained that of Cologne. The pope, who is now master, is not well disposed towards us. We wish therefore to be in a situation to answer for every thing,

and perhaps to attack the first. Time will tell us more. My dear cousin, and my dear niece, I constantly commend you to the charms of each other's society. This is a blessing in which fortune has no influence.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I AM delighted, sir, that your taste agrees with ours with regard to Abbadie; it is a good sign for us: he is pursued by envy and criticism; but who does not, or has not, shared the same fate?

LETTER *DCCLXXXV.

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, August 26, 1688.

You ask me, sir, who are the persons with whom I have been at law? I am so tired of hearing the names of my enemies, that I cannot bring myself to mention them; I wish even to forget them, and my law-suit also. It is true, I have acquired great esteem with the attorneys; but I cannot keep pace with madame de Montataire: she has only to ask and have, but I must defend myself. This difference in our success, makes the same difference in our happiness. Really, sir, you are very much mistaken, in supposing I am more calculated to steal hearts than to gain law-suits; thank God, it is quite the contrary. Do me, therefore, no longer the injustice of omitting to reckon in the number of my perfections, that of understanding law admirably. But, sir, at the very time I was hoping to enjoy the repose which my capacity has acquired me, I am terrified by a sound of war. I have a son, who has taken it into his head to be seventeen years of age; this is said to be the prime of life, not to go to law, but to go to war;

and this induces me to wish he were older, to be able to endure its fatigues, or younger, not to be exposed to them. But for this evil there is no remedy. In the midst of vexations or of repose, I am very sensible to the proofs of your friendship and esteem; I ask you to continue them to me, and assure you, that I love and respect you highly.

LETTER * DCCLXXXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Friday, September 3, 1688.

I INFORMED you, sir, of the arrival of M. de Vardes at court after his exile. I can now inform you of his arrival to-day in heaven; for every Christian may presume on his neighbour's salvation, when he expires in the bosom of the church with all its sacraments. This poor man, after a long and tedious illness, as you know, at length put himself under the care of M. Sanguin. At first, his restoring medicines seemed to have revived him; but nature not assisting these admirable cordials, he sunk again, and for four days struggled with death, sometimes at the last gasp, sometimes taking quinquina, then sinking again in such a way, that his daughter left him more than two days ago in a fainting fit resembling death, and M. de Rohan very inconsiderately placed his red porter in the room of the green, and then, ashamed of this impudence, placed the green in the room of the red; but at three o'clock in the afternoon he was enabled to reinstate the red in perfect safety; for it was at that hour M. de Vardes expired with great pain, and talking to the last. He has written to the king, imploring his pardon again, and his favour for his children. I know not whether he has

asked the government or the blue justaucorps for M. de Rohan †. Our friend was named in a former will, which he destroyed, but not in the last. The bishop de Mirepoix, who conducted him to heaven, asked him the reason of this omission, and he replied, that for some time Corbinelli had ridiculed him: this has not appeared to any one but himself; and seems to have been our poor friend's misfortune. The resignation of M. de Vardes was not disturbed by this: his director did not quit him; he made him receive the holy viaticum and extreme unction on his recovery from a long fit of stupor, and talked to him of God, rationally and simply. His family were not present: M. de Vardes appeared satisfied, and grateful for this important service; he had taken madame D**** and her family two days before to a ready-furnished house, where she wished to go. He saw her to-day: she weeps, but not ridiculously: he has left the cross of the order, which the grand master gave him, to his successors, messieurs de Roquelaure and de Foix; a large diamond to the duchess du Lude, because she has diamonds already to the value of fifty thousand crowns. I know no more; I regret him, because there is not a man at court formed after his model. Adieu, excellent friend.

LETTER * DCCLXXXVII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, September 22, 1688.

It is true that I love the reputation of our German cousin. The marquis de Villars told me wonders on his return from Vienna, of his valour and his merit, which

† Louis de Rohan Chabot, duke de Rohan, was the son-in-law of M. de Vardes

seemed daily increasing, and of his wife, and the elegance of his house. You are the occasion, my dear cousin, of my writing to this duchess-countess, by my sending her your packet. I admire, at all times, the sports and arrangements of Providence. It has decreed, that this Rabutin of Germany, our junior in every respect, should, by the most eccentric and cross roads, rise to high dignity and be happy; and that a count de Bussy, the elder branch of his family, with great valour, wit, services, wealth, and even the most brilliant post in war, should be the most unhappy man of the French court. O Providence, do as thou thinkest fit! thou art the sovereign disposer of all things, and so far above us, that we must adore thee under all thy dispensations, and kiss the hand which strikes and chastises us; for in thy sight we all deserve to be punished. I am very melancholy, my dear cousin; our beloved countess de Provence, whom you love so much, is going to leave us in a week; this separation breaks my heart, and obliges me to go to Britany: I have a great deal of business there, but I feel that my journey proceeds more from a little amorous spite. I will have nothing to do with Paris without her; I am in rage with the whole world; I will bury myself in a desert. Well, good people! do you understand affection better than we do? We could give lessons to others; but indeed it is very painful to excel in this way: those who have so much sensibility are very unfortunate. Let us change the subject. You have heard of the death of your old friend Vivonne? He died suddenly, in a sound sleep, his head bewildered. The king goes to Fontainbleau on the twenty-eighth of this month. There is some other plan, which is kept secret. The active preparations, which were at first made for war, begin to slacken. The fleet of the prince of Orange, which is ready to set

sail, is alone worthy of attention. It is supposed to be directed towards England. In the mean time our coasts are guarded: the governors of Britany and Normandy are sent home. All this looks very much overcast. A great many clouds are gathered: the unravelling of the plot merits not to be lost sight of.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

NEITHER the prince of Orange nor his allies have any design upon us. They are thinking only of England, or of preventing any attacks we might wish to make upon them, by showing us that they have the means of defence, without intending to act upon the offensive. This is what I wish in the devices of politics †. Adieu, sir, I thank you with all my heart for your condolence on the death of two persons, which afflicted me for two months. My turn will come, when it pleases Heaven. I know not whether it will grieve me; but I am sure it will not surprise me.

LETTER * DCCLXXXVIII.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Coligny, September 28, 1688.

ALL who are returned from Vienna, say the same things, madam, of our cousin, as M. de Villars has told you.

† It is known how completely Lewis XIV. was deceived with respect to the plans of the prince of Orange. His two ambassadors, d'Avaux, who was at the Hague, and Barillon, who was in London, made totally different reports, and gave contrary advice. The latter assured his sovereign, but was himself deceived by the false assurance of king James II.; and it was he who was believed. The English put to flight the ally of France, crowned his enemy, and Europe was engaged in war for near twenty-eight years.

He and his wife are the ornament of the emperor's court. What you say of Providence on this subject is very true. I can make no addition to it, except that I receive all my misfortunes from the hand of God, as infallible proofs of predestination. The last time I saw father de la Chaise, he told me, on my complaining of the severity of fortune, that it was a method God took of showing his love to me. I replied, that I believed it; that I saw plainly he wished to take me to himself, and that he should have me, but that I had rather have obtained my salvation through the means of any other person than the king.

LETTER * DCCLXXXIX.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI TO THE PRESIDENT DE MOULCEAU.

Wednesday, September 22, 1688.

NOTHING, sir, was ever better thought, or better expressed, than the reasoning in your letter. The world here is dissatisfied that M. de Vardes should have left me nothing. I am delighted that the world at Languedoc has been of the same opinion. I was by no means the slave, and still less the friend, of the last Vardes; I mean him who succeeded the first: a year ago the first honoured me in his will; but the last caused it to be torn in pieces twenty-five days before his death. These were two persons of a very different character in many respects, but particularly in what related to me. If the first could have survived the last, he would have laughed at his successor upon this subject, as well as upon many others; he had fallen, as it were, not into delirium, but folly. His intention was, to end his life in

Languedoc, and this desire was so strong as to have become his ruling passion; after which followed love for **** and hatred to his son-in-law; which was stronger than ——. These three passions accompanied him to the tribunal of God, where he could only defend the first by the spirituality of the second; with regard to the third, I can only say in the words of Juvenal, and I say it as from God, "Dic, Quintiliane, colorem." Some one told me, a fortnight before his death, that he had declared he would never forgive me for having given him such a son-in-law. I replied, that his son-in-law would never forgive me for having given him such a father-in-law. I desired the person who told me this, to tell him so from me; and, between ourselves, I had resolved never to see him again, and to send him word, that since he complained of me, he should have the pleasure of my absence till he asked my pardon for doing so. Death has calmed this tempest, and I have gained by it a tranquillity I little expected. They talk here of disputing his donation to madame D****; but, in my opinion, there is no chance of their succeeding. Adieu, my friend, continue to me the honour of your good opinion, unprejudiced by the rancour of jealousy.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

NOTHING scarcely is left to be said after a person who has expressed himself so well. I must, however, set you right with regard to what you have been told, that madame D**** had received, besides the donation, a quantity of plate, and two thousand pistoles: this is not true; on the contrary, he wished to give her a sum of money to return home, and she quitted the house abruptly; so abruptly that, as he was ill, it was sup-

posed she was flying for assistance, and that he was dying; but, in reality, she flew from a sort of present, which, under such circumstances, excited her abhorrence. I have already told you, that this lady was very much liked in this country: her accent, her manners, her simplicity even, were taken in good part, which powerfully confirms what you say, that our eyes are not the eyes we ought to have, if we would view things as Christians; but this fashion is so completely gone by, that the best women have not even retained the tradition of it. Adieu, my dear president: pity me; my daughter is going to Provence, and I am overwhelmed with grief: it is so natural to attach and accustom ourselves to the society of an amiable and beloved person, by whom too we are beloved in an equal degree, that this separation is indeed a martyrdom. If we could hope to meet again some day at Grignan, this would be a sort of consolation: but, alas! the prospect is distant, and the farewell near at hand. So we are soon to see M. de la Trousse. I have told M. de Carcassonne of the pleasure you have received from the success of his harangue to the king: it was, indeed, noble and good, like himself. You know that M. du Maine has the charge of the galleys, which M. de Vivonne formerly held: four hundred thousand francs have been given to madame de Vivonne. You know all the news better than we do: I therefore conclude.

LETTER DCCXC.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, October 8, 1688.

WHAT a tremendous rain, just, my child, as you are going to descend that frightful mountain of Rochepot! How numberless are the vexations of those who love with any degree of fervour! we know not how to love heroically, notwithstanding the example of heroism below*: but there is no knowing you, without being attached to you with the greatest tenderness. Our poor hero is still dreadfully afflicted with the gout; it is a perfect martyrdom. There are several persons of wit and learning, as St. Romain †, the abbé Bigorré, Crosailles ‡, who visit him, with a view to divert his painful moments with the news of the day, and other topics; but still he suffers greatly.

Our young marquis could not have been at the opening of the trenches; for M. de Vauban could not wait the arrival of the dauphin, on account of the rains: we are still persuaded, that in a very few days your mind will be at ease.

The prince of Orange has declared himself protector of the religion of the church of England, and has demanded the young prince §, that he may be brought

* Meaning the chevalier de Grignan, who had an apartment in the hotel de Carnavalet, madame de Sévigné's house at Paris.

† St. Romain had been ambassador in Switzerland.

‡ Brother of marshal de Catinet, and a man of great merit. He had been captain of the French guards, but had quitted the service on account of ill health.

§ James, prince of Wales, son of James II., born the 20th June 1688; but better known afterwards by the name of the Pretender.

up in that faith. This is a great event: several of the English nobility have joined him. You know that La Trousse has taken Avignon *. Madame de Coulanges, who overflows with money, has lent mademoiselle de Meri a thousand francs; we expect that lady here every day. M. de la Trousse (her brother) will very readily repay the loan.

I am much pleased, my dear child, that you approve the coming of the good abbé de Bigorré; his company will prove no small amusement to me. We entertain ourselves below stairs with frequent conversations upon the state of our affairs; I find there all the consolation that a sound understanding and a generous heart can afford me: for, the more the chevalier is known, the more he must be esteemed and loved. I have no need to ask him, if you love me; for I am convinced of it by a thousand instances; but, without questioning him upon the subject, he gave me the most charming proofs of it. We eat together, and keep a very good table. The philosophy of Corbinelli is to come to-night; we have written in all our apartments: *Fais ce que tu voudras; vive la sainte liberté* †.

I have seen madame de Fontenilles: she has lately lost her mother, and seems overwhelmed with grief; you will judge what impression this made upon me. Her mother died in a shocking way, crying out in all the agonies of despair, and terrified with the thought of taking the last sacraments; she received them, however, but with a gloomy and dreadful silence. Her son and Alliot arrived just two hours after her death.

* Some disputes that had happened between the court of France and that of Rome, had obliged Lewis XIV. to seize upon the county of Venaissin, belonging to the pope.

† Do as you like: reign, sacred Liberty!

Adieu, my beloved child; we know not what to do without you; every one exclaims,

Rien ne peut réparer les biens que j'ai perdus*.

We are surrounded with your pictures. The princess is very beautiful; but we still sigh for a certain person, who is at present in the midst of the sloughs of Rochepot.

LETTER DCCXCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, October 11, 1688.

I HAVE received your two letters from Joigny and Auxerre; the road to the former makes me shudder to behold it; for, my dearest countess, I see you in my mind's eye wherever you go, and the melancholy that oppresses you weighs me down by sympathy. You would certainly have been much better situated here; you would sooner have received news from M. de St. Pouanges, who has promised the chevalier to take particular care of your son: you would have known that a certain little fort, which might have occasioned our friends some trouble, was taken before his highness† arrived. Here too you would have learned, that, on account of this prince going to the trenches, M. de Vauban has doubled all the precautions which he generally takes for the safety of the besiegers. You would have known, that it was not the regiment of Cham-

* Nothing can repair the blessings I have lost.

† The dauphin, who was to make the siege of Philipsburg, with marshal Duras as general under him, and the famous engineer M. de Vauban to conduct the operations of the siege.

pagne, but of Picardy, which opened the trenches, at which, however, no one was wounded; and, in short, you would have seen that all the good women of this country, who have husbands, brothers, sons, cousins, or what you please, embarked in the same affair, eat, drink, laugh, sing, visit, chat, reason, and hope soon to behold again the objects of their affection. It is a real grief to me, that, instead of doing like the rest, you should hide yourself from all the world, and maintain a cruel tête-à-tête with a dragon, that preys on your very vitals, without a single object to amuse you, starting at your own imagination, and thinking of every thing dreadful that can possibly happen; nothing can be so insupportable and distressing as such a situation. Let me entreat you, my dear child, if it be possible, to have pity on yourself; believe me, you are in greater danger than your son; pray follow the advice of M. de Grignan, M. de Carcassonne, and the chevalier, who have all written to you upon the subject. I would not mention the letter your son wrote to you; it was impossible to read it without being pierced to the heart; but this is not a subject to be dwelt on.

Give yourself no uneasiness about what I have written to M. de la Garde; every thing will go as you could wish; and it will only serve to increase the esteem he already has for you, when he perceives what a sacrifice you are willing to make in order to live upon good terms with your relations: so discharge this from the number of your griefs. Mademoiselle de Meri occupies your apartment; it is not, however, very agreeable to find the door always shut against one with *a head-ache*, or *the megrim*. Oh, how well did our lovely countess fill every place! how did she enliven all around her! Corbinelli's philosophy is still in the room you are so well acquainted with; but we see

it less than in the square*. All the world is taken up with the news; the good abbé Bigorré is in the height of his triumph; he will be here in three or four days. I have already informed you that the chevalier and I eat together, and that an unbounded freedom reigns every where; but the use we make of it is, to be almost always together. Our way of thinking is so very much alike, our interests and our feelings are in such exact unison, that it would be doing violence to ourselves to keep asunder.

Madame de Coulanges has lost her brother; it is said the cordelier killed him; but I insist upon it that it was death. Yesterday I saw my widows, who have such love and esteem for you that you may reckon them in the number of your real friends. Madame de la Fayette is always the same. Her son writes her word, that he was a long time with yours, but that they were obliged to part at Metz; and that is all.

How affectionately, how warmly, is your presence regretted and desired in the little chamber! the coffee takes its round there regularly every morning; and it has been always so much my fate to be the last, that I cannot even obtain the preference over the chevalier; but you, my dearest child, are no longer there: that is the death-stroke to us all. Adieu, my lovely; there is no happiness for me without you.

* Place Royale.

LETTER DCCXCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, October 13, 1688.

We live in daily expectation of hearing from you; we follow you step by step: you should have written to us from Châlons; to-morrow you will be at Lyons; I tell you so, in case you should not know it. It is really a relief to me to write to you; for my letters to Britany are so fatiguing, that I am glad to turn from them towards my dear child. There is great reason to believe that Philipsburg will not keep us much longer in our present state of suspense. You will see by the letter the chevalier has sent you, that our little marquis arrived there in perfect health, and without being the least fatigued; you will see what care will be taken of him, and you will find that his highness has surrounded the place, without receiving any fire from the garrison: in short, that the trenches are so well disposed, that, in all probability, every thing will succeed to our wishes.

You say justly, this is a strange October! I never passed such a one before. Our dear marquis used never to run any risk in this month, but that of missing a partridge or a hare, and that always by accident: but now we scarcely live: I have not only my own uneasinesses, but feel yours also in the most lively manner. I know that merciless imagination of yours; how you will support such long sufferings, Heaven only can tell.

We are in hopes that the prince of Orange has taken wrong measures, and that the king of England will give him a warm reception, and beat him handsomely. He has had a conference with his nobles; he has left those

at liberty who are not inclined to serve him, and has strengthened the attachment of those who are faithful to him: he has published a general liberty of conscience, and has given the command of his troops to the count de Roye, who, being a zealous protestant, is very agreeable to the English.—In short, my dear, what shall I say to you? You heed me not, I am well assured; your thoughts are wholly engrossed by your son, nor can I blame you; but we hope to give you, in a few days, the most perfect satisfaction by informing you of the reduction of Philipsburg, and the safety of the marquis. In the mean time, let me entreat you, my beloved child, to take care of yourself, if such a thing be possible; do not waste your flesh in unavailing sorrow, nor destroy your eyes with continual weeping. Have courage, pluck up your spirits; I beg this of you a thousand and a thousand times.

LETTER DCCXCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Sunday, October 15, 1688.

It is now a week since we heard from you: you cannot imagine how tedious the time appears. I am just returned from a visit to madame de la Fayette, who received a letter from her son on the eleventh: he informs her, that our child is very well. The chevalier has told you all he knows; he is in despair at not being able to go to Fontainbleau: you would rather receive news from him, but we must submit to what God pleases. Madame de Lavardin has been under great concern about Jarzé, who, as he was passing through the trenches, had his hand taken off at the wrist, by a cannon-ball, which obliged him to have his arm imme-

diately amputated above the elbow; this is a melancholy circumstance for so young a man! Nothing, however, can exceed the precaution M. de Vauban has taken for the security of every one: the dauphin goes the first to the trenches, and the duke and prince de Conti are not wanting on their parts; but it is forbidden, under pain of imprisonment, that any of the volunteers should follow them, or quit the respective regiments to which they belong*. All will go well, my child; in the name of God, be careful of yourself, and take a dose or two of that patience we all live upon here; continual uneasiness is as prejudicial as it is useless.

The chevalier and I took a walk to Vincennes yesterday; you will readily conceive the subject of our thoughts and conversation. I write this to you from his apartment; he is just going to send away his packet. Adieu, therefore, my beloved countess; I cannot reconcile myself to be without you; and my affection for you is such, as I believe no one else can attain.

LETTER DCCXCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, October 18, 1688.

We received your letters from Chalons, my dear child, the very day after the complaints we made of having been a week without hearing from you. It was a long time, and the heart suffers by uncertainty; accordingly we enter into your feelings at not having any news from Philipsburg. Hitherto your son has continued

* The marquis de Grignan was now making his first campaign in the quality of volunteer in the regiment of Champagne, of which his father, the count de Grignan, had been colonel.

well, and conducted himself admirably; he hears the cannon thundering round, and the balls flying about him, without the least emotion; he has mounted in the trenches, and sends his uncle an account of the siege, as if he were an old soldier; he is very much beloved, and has frequently the honour of dining at the dauphin's table, who talks to him familiarly, and admits him to do many little offices about his person. M. de Beauvilliers caresses him like his own child, and St. Pouanges—but you will find a full account of all these matters in the chevalier's letters. I only mention these circumstances to give some degree of merit to my own, by entertaining you with the subject that must be nearest your heart. But to return to our journey.

What a vile road! Indeed, indeed, my good count, you ought to blush for what you have done. I well knew that the mountain of Rochepot was a precipice, concealed by a little good for nothing hedge, and the road covered with large loose flints; but at length this vile road is passed, and we will come back another way, if God pleases, as I earnestly hope he will. We fancy that you will embark on the Rhone to-day, after having called at Thésé *. We have horrible weather here! the poor chevalier is still very much troubled with weakness in his legs, though he is free from pain; this gives him no small concern, and he stands in need of all his fortitude to bear with a condition so very inimical to what he calls his duty; he cannot get to Fontainbleau, where a thousand affairs call him. I am astonished that your health is proof against the continual uneasiness you endure. It is a miracle; endeavour to continue this, and do not exhaust yourself by either

* An ancient seat belonging to the family of Chateauneuf de Rochebonne.

sleeping at night, or eating by day: but who can command the imagination? It grieves me to hear that you grow thin; I dread the air of Grignan for that reason, for I love every thing in you, even your beauty, which is only the least object of my affection: you have a heart that cannot be too much admired, too much adored; have some compassion, however, upon your picture, and do not let it look like that of another person; rest yourself at La Garde; for my part, I must speak my sentiments boldly, which are, that if the situation of Grignan should not agree with you, and the breaking of the rocks there should occasion as unhealthy an air, as digging up the ground at Maintenon * has done, this would be the resolution I would take, without giving myself the least concern, without scolding any one, and without complaining: I would very coolly desire M. de la Garde to let me stay at his house with Paulina, your women, and two footmen, till the place was decent and habitable. This is what I should do without hesitation; and it would save you a number of troublesome visits, as it would readily be supposed that a house that was repairing, was no place to receive company.

You desire I would inform you of the state of my health, and of the life I lead; in answer to which, I have to tell you, first, that I have found my blood a little heated, have had some bad nights, and have shed many tears; things which are not favourable to health, and for that reason I am uneasy about yours; however, by the help of a proper regimen, I am pretty well recovered. As to my way of life, you know it already: it is passed chiefly in the lower apartment,

* It is well known, that removing the earth in the camp de Maintenon occasioned many disorders.

where I am fixed, as it were, by destiny; however, I strive neither to be troublesome nor disagreeable, and, if I am not mistaken, my presence is rather desired. We are continually talking of you, your son, and your affairs. I shall presently pay a visit to madame de la Fayette and madame de Lavardin, who both talk to me of you, and love and esteem you. The other day I was at madame de Mouchi's, yesterday at the marchioness d'Huxelles'. There is not a creature in Paris; in the evening, indeed, they just return in time to go to bed, and the next morning, as soon as they rise, away again to Fontainbleau; thus our lives pass quickly, because time does the same. Mademoiselle de Meri is very well pleased with us, and we with her. We have the abbé Bigorré, who is indeed the most agreeable and least troublesome of all our guests. Corbinelli is in Normandy with the lieutenant of the police, and will not return till next month. Did I tell you that the chevalier and I went the other day to Vincennes? we had a long chat, and I walked a great deal, but all this was in a melancholy style, I need not tell you why.

The same day.

My letter was sealed when I received yours dated *from the boat below Maçon*; all the expressions of affection it contains enchant me; if I did not feel the excess of my love for you, I should be ashamed, and almost persuaded that you know more on that head than myself. You may be assured that I shall not quit Paris either while the fate of Philipsburg remains undetermined, or the chevalier continues here; for these are things which naturally engross my attention. In the mean time be under no apprehension that I will suffer myself to be starved. We still continue to eat, though

it is the bread of affliction. The thought of my dear child prevails with me every where. No person could profit more by living under the same roof with you, than I have done. How delightfully did our mornings pass! We used to be two hours together before others were awake. I cannot reproach myself with having lost either time or opportunity of being with you. I was too covetous of the pleasure; I never left you without an earnest desire to return, nor ever returned without feeling sensibly the pleasure of seeing you again, and passing the evening with you. May God forgive me this weakness! so much fervour was due to him alone. Your moral reflections are just and good.

Madame de Vins has been under some uneasiness about her husband; she has at length received a letter from him; he is safe at present, *for he is at the siege of Philipsburg;* he was obliged to pass through some dangerous woods, and his friends were a considerable time without hearing from him. If the air and noise of Grignan prove troublesome to you, go to La Garde; this is still my advice. A thousand kind remembrances to all your Grignans, I am certain M. de la Garde will be one of the number. Paulina, my dear, how are you? She is a happy creature to see you, and be obliged to love you.

No one understands better than myself the attachment we have for inanimate, and consequently ungrateful, things; witness my folly on the subject of Livri; you have caught the infection from me.

LETTER DCCXCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, October 20, 1688.

We have received your packet from Thésé, of which you gave us a most agreeable description. I could not have expected to find so much politeness and good order on the top of a mountain; the lady of the mansion* always noble, lovely, and worthy of being beloved. You did well to answer for Corbinelli, that he cannot shake off his chains. I am afraid, with all this splendid outside, this poor woman is not truly happy; I pity her, and hate the cause of her troubles. But let me turn the conversation to you, my dear child.

Heaven be praised, you have passed the proud, restless, turbulent Rhone! If an alliance were to be made between it and the Durance, when the latter is in its airs, there would be curious work! We are impatient to have your letters from La Garde. Do your youth and health still hold out against your dragons, your anxious days and restless nights? It is the thought of these that alarms me, for I know nothing so fatal; and all this happens to you from having moved so far from the centre of news, and giving too great a rein to your imagination: were you with us, you would know, like us, what passes almost every day, and, like us, be satisfied that the little soldier is an adept in his new profession: he writes with great spirit and vivacity; he has twice mounted guard in the trenches; he has helped to carry

* Theresa Adhemar de Monteil, countess de Rochebonne, and sister of M. de Grignan.

the fascines, and he is in perfect health. The chevalier is delighted with him, and wrote to him thus: "You are no longer a boy, you are no longer my nephew, you are my companion in arms." This will overpay the young hero for all he has done. The worst is now past, for it is supposed that the regiment of Champagne will not mount again in the trenches. What joy will you feel, my dear countess, when I shall write you word, *Philipsburg is taken, and your son is safe!* then, if it please God, you will once more breathe freely, and so shall I, for it is not to be supposed that any one can enjoy life tranquilly in your present situation. Our little marquis directs all his letters, under cover, to me, apologizing for *the liberty*. In short, every thing goes well; however, we wait to hear from you with all the anxiety that is occasioned by true regard. I embrace M. de Grignan and the prelates who are with you, and M. de la Garde, who is in one place, and Paulina who is in another; but what am I talking of? you are all together at your mansion. Well! and how do you find yourselves? how goes on the trowel? Methinks we hear Mansard * from hence calling out for the coadjutor.

The prince of Orange is on our coasts, his fleet all dismasted, and his fresh water all spoiled: a squadron, that he sent to tamper with the commander of the English fleet, would have been severely handled, if they had dared to come within gun-shot; the wind dispersed six or seven of them, as they returned. The king † has conciliated the minds of all, by a little indulgence in point of religion. God has hitherto protected him. Adieu, my dearly beloved child, I know not what to say to you on the score of my affection;

* Master-builder to the king. † James II.

I want words, or find them too weak, to express the full force of my sentiments.

LETTER DCCXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, October 22, 1688.

I BEGIN with your dear son; nothing is so easy to divine as your sentiments, and do you think we have not the same? But we have a happiness, that it is not your fault you do not enjoy also, that of having fresh news every day, whereas you are forced to languish a whole week in expectation. We know that the dauphin is often at the trenches, and that the other day he was quite covered with dust, raised by a cannon-ball that fell a few paces from him. You will judge, as we do, if these trenches are proper for a king's son; fascines are carried thither, but in the night only. The regiment of Champagne, however, will not be put to hard duty. By this packet you will receive a letter from M. du Plessis, that will show you how many excellent governors your son has about him. We shall find him at his return quite another being. I build my hopes upon the chevalier's opinion, who thinks the place cannot hold out much longer, and that, as Vauban is sure of being master of it, he will not hurry matters, but take even more care of the men than he is accustomed to do, and yet you know how cautious he is of hazarding their lives. The dauphin is adored by the whole army; he is liberality itself; he provides for the wants of all the wounded: he has sent three hundred louis-d'ors to the marquis de Nesle*; he furnishes those with bag-

* Louis de Mailly, marquis de Nesle; he died some time after at Spelres, of the wound he received at the siege of Philipsburg.

gage who have lost their own; he distributes gifts amongst the common men; he writes to the king in praise of all the officers, and recommends them to his majesty's favour; he gives a great deal, because, to use his own words, he finds many objects: the king reads his letters in public; the chevalier triumphs not a little on this occasion, and cries, "Well! is not this just what I told you? It is no more than I expected." In short, my child, our dear boy is fortunate in making his first campaign under such a prince; and I am certain that, notwithstanding the uneasiness you may endure, you would not, upon any consideration, have him at home with you. The circumstance of finding himself in the midst of all the officers who served in his uncle's regiment, must be a great satisfaction to you. I could talk on this subject till to-morrow.

A word or two of your love for me. You make me blush by its excess; not that I can charge myself with being behindhand with you in this respect; but that I think no one has a title to your regard but your son, while the siege of Philipsburg lasts. Give up all thoughts of me, therefore, and cease to overwhelm me with your affection; for how shall I make a return, otherwise than by saying, "All that I have, I give unto you?" Pray write to your brother; he has done very well; I have his power of attorney: he would be much admired by us, if you did not spoil the trade; but your perfection effaces every thing: there is no heart like yours; do not form yourself therefore by our model, but write to him prettily, after the conquest of Philipsburg, and in such a way as to show that you are satisfied with him, as I am and ought to be. The chevalier and I are still firm friends, but do not let this awaken jealousy in you: we love each other in, through, and by you. I know not what you mean by your ill-hu-

mour; you have no humour that does not give us infinite pleasure, and we cannot sufficiently expatiate on the noble and just way of thinking with which Heaven has blessed you; this furnishes us with an inexhaustible fund of conversation. He is still anxious to go to Fontainbleau, but his legs will not serve him; for myself, I am in good health; Heaven preserve yours to you, my child, for, say what you will, I shall never think you perfectly well while the present cause of anxiety remains.

I fancy you found the poor cardinal de Bouillon very dejected *, notwithstanding all the beauties of his retreat; it must have been a great pleasure to him to see you again. I return him a thousand thanks for his kind remembrance, and to-morrow I shall make all my widows happy with yours. We are going to bid adieu to madame de Mouci, she is preparing for her usual journey; she desired me the other day to embrace you in her name. Madame de Lavardin will be rejoiced at the complaisance of madame de Rochebonne; she had this affair greatly at heart, and indeed it was but reasonable to let her have the care of her little nephews, of whom she is so fond.

M. de la Garde has written to me like a man who has great esteem for you, and who is exactly of our way of thinking. You cannot take too much advantage of his talents and friendship. We live upon very good terms with mademoiselle de Meri, as well as with the abbé Bigorré, whose company we have not so often as we could wish. Corbinelli is still in Normandy with the lieutenant of the police.

Yesterday a stag killed the horse of one of the king's grooms, whose name I do not remember, and wounded

* He was an exile. See note to Letter 737.

the man himself dangerously; the grandson of St. Hérem, as he was riding neck or nothing with the count de Toulouse, was thrown, and lay speechless for three hours. He is now better.

LETTER DCCXCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, October 25, 1688.

The impatience we are in to hear from you, which makes us even send to meet the post-boy, and the joy we feel when we hear, that, notwithstanding your uneasiness, you still continue in good health, seem, in some measure, to entitle us to the kindness with which you furnish us with the information; and you may judge, by the need we have of such comfort, how much we consider ourselves obliged to you for your punctuality. I always say *we*, for the chevalier's sentiments and mine are so much alike, that I know not how to separate them. But now a word of Philipsburg.

You will receive a letter from your son, of the 19th instant; he was then perfectly well, and you will find by what M. du Plessis says of him, that he is not likely to bring any disgrace upon his family: but admire with me the arrangements of Providence; the rain prevented his regiment from being present at the most glorious, and at the same time the hottest action that has taken place since the commencement of the siege; it was the attacking a horn-work, which our troops carried on the 19th, the day after he wrote his letter; the marquis d'Harcourt, marshal de camp, the count de Cajole, and the youngest son of the prince de Tingri, the count d'Estrées, and several others of our acquaintance, distinguished themselves greatly on this occasion.

Courtin's son is mortally wounded; the marquis d'Huxelles has received a slight hurt, and poor Bordage paid for all two days before. The king has given his regiment to the duke du Maine, and has promised Bordage's son another, with a pension of a thousand crowns. The two princes, and all the young volunteers, are in despair at not having been present at this fine entertainment; but it happened not to be their day. They were obliged, in a manner, to tie the dauphin neck and heels, to prevent him from going into the trenches. Vauban took him round the waist, and forced him out of them, together with M. Beauvilliers. In short, this prince is the darling of the soldiers*; he begs regiments for some, and presents for others; he throws his money by handfuls amongst the wounded and the needy. It is thought the place cannot hold out long after the lodgment we have made. The governor being confined to his bed by a fit of sickness, and the officer who commanded in his stead being taken prisoner, it is hoped and believed, that no other person will take upon himself to play so losing a game. The chevalier makes me laugh by saying in a breath, that he is rejoiced that the marquis was not present at the action, and in despair that he had not an opportunity of distinguishing himself; in short, he wishes that he were just as safe as himself, and yet, at the same time, that his reputation as a soldier were as well established as his; but we must have a little patience: let us hope, however, my child, that every thing will succeed according to our wishes, and that you may again behold your son safe.

I find you were extremely well received at La Garde,

* During this siege, they gave him the name of *Louis le Hardi*, or Lewis the Bold. See La Fontaine's ballad, vol. i. of his miscellaneous works.

and that at length, by mere dint of moving on, you are arrived at Grignan. You will inform us how you find yourself there, and how that poor substance, which thinks, and thinks so strongly, has been able to preserve its fair and delicate form in such excellent order, amidst such violent agitations. You have made one distinction more than your father Descartes ever did.

Death has been more busy here than even at the siege of Philipsburg. Poor La Chaise*, who was so fond of you, who had so much learning, and who displayed it so well in his life of St. Lewis, died lately in the country of a fever. M. du Bois is sensibly affected at his death. Madame de Longueval, or the *canon* †, is also dead of a quinsey; she entertained an irreconcileable hatred to our Montataire ‡. It gives me concern that any persons should carry such sentiments with them into the other world. You see how Death goes about picking up those whom God chooses to remove from hence.

Madame de Lavardin gave me a thousand compliments for you yesterday, as did madame d'Huxelles, madame de Mouci, and mademoiselle de la Rochefoucault, whom we have received into the number of our widowhood. I likewise include madame de la Fayette; but as she was not at madame de Mouci's yesterday, I mention her separately. Nothing can exceed the esteem all these good personages express for you. Adieu, amiable and beloved child: I often speak of

* John Filleau de la Chaise, author of a life of St. Lewis, which was greatly esteemed. He was brother to M. de St. Martin, author of a translation of Don Quixote.

† Madame de Longueval, canoness of Remiremont, was known in the world under the title of the *canon*; she was sister to marshal d'Estrées.

‡ Marie de Rabutin, marchioness de Montataire, who had for a long time carried on an obstinate law-suit against madame de Longueval.

you with pleasure, because it is almost always in your praise. We are divided between our attention to philosophy and to you, for these are the only two objects of our thoughts at present.

LETTER DCCXCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, October 26, 1688.

Oh! what a letter, my child! it well deserves that I should come here on purpose to receive it, as I did. At length, then, you are arrived safe at Grignan, and are in perfect health; and such is my fate, that, though you are removed at the distance of half the globe from me, I must rejoice at it. Perhaps it may please Heaven that ere long I shall embrace you again; let me live in that hope. You make a very pleasing portrait of Paulina. I know her again; she is not at all altered, as M. de Grignan would have made us believe she was. She is a sweet creature, and worthy of being loved She adores you, and her absolute submission to your will, even in the midst of her joy at seeing you, if you decide that she should leave you again, at once engages my pity and concern; nor can I help admiring the power she has over herself. Were I in your place, I should be loath to part with such an agreeable companion, who will at once furnish you with amusement and occupation. I would make her work at her needle, and read works of taste; I would argue with her, and sound the depth of her capacity. I would talk to her with affection and confidence; for, believe me, you will never be tired of her society, on the contrary, she may be of great use to you. In short, I would make the most of her, and would not punish myself by depriving myself of such a comfort.

I am very glad the chevalier speaks well of me; my vanity is concerned in preserving his good opinion: if he is fond of my company, I, in return, can never have too much of his, and I think it a proof of good taste, to be desirous of cultivating his esteem. I know not how you can say, that your humour is a cloud, which hides or obscures the affections you have for me. If such may have been the case formerly, you have for many years past totally removed the veil, and you no longer conceal from me any part of the most perfect and tender affection that one person can entertain for another. Heaven will reward you for it in your own children, who will love you, not in the same way, as perhaps they may not be capable of it, but at least to the utmost of their abilities, and we can desire no more.

You represent M. de Carcassonne's building as a body without a soul, wanting life, and all the nerves of war. I think the coadjutor is not less wanting in this respect. My God! what are they about? but I will say no more. It would be well, however, if there were some end to all this, and that they would relieve you from the noise and confusion with which you are at present surrounded.

They say poor Jarzé is dead of his wounds. The siege of Philipsburg will soon be at an end, and you will then rejoice that your son was there; it is like the Candia * expedition. The marchioness d'Huxelles seems perfectly indifferent about the slight wound her son † has received; but they are neither friends nor

* It may be remembered, that in the year 1660, M. de Sévigné went to serve at the siege of Candia, almost against the consent of his mother.

† Nicholas du Blé, marquis d'Huxelles, afterwards marshal of France, in the year 1703.

M. d'Huxelles was one of the original characters of this period. With exemplary conduct, abandoning himself to none but the most innocent

relations; you and I are not happy, or unhappy, enough, to have the same feelings. The marchioness is very thoughtful of M de la Garde *, the good effects of which you will experience. She has a collection of letters that were written to the Venetian ambassador, which are reckoned admirable in their kind.

We have had deplorable weather for some time past; but every one is rejoiced at it, as it, in some degree, frustrates the designs of the prince of Orange. I do not think the chevalier will go to Fontainbleau at last. I intend to take a trip to Brevannes, in order to stretch my legs a little; but this will not be till after Philipsburg is taken, which holds out longer than was expected, and gives me some little uneasiness. The chevalier and I have taken another walk to Vincennes; it is a delightful retreat, for there is not a human being to be seen there.

Dispose of my friendship, my compliments, my love, my embraces, as you think proper, for I know not whom you have with you; but be sure not to forget my Paulina; prepare her to love me, and give her, upon reading this, a kiss from me. I am willing that

pleasures, living away from the court by inclination, and apparently very little solicitous to please, he knew how to acquire a large fortune, without being indebted for it to his merit, for he was a general of very slender reputation. In 1688, he received the blue ribbon: but instead of writing to thank the king for it, "he only thanked M. de Louvois, and desired the courier to tell him at the same time, that if this order would prevent him from going to the tavern and other such places, he would send it back to him again." This is what madame de la Fayette relates of him, who besides speaks highly of him; whereas St. Simon blackens him a good deal. It is to M. d'Huxelles this saying is attributed: when he was asked why he did not marry, he replied, "Because I have never yet seen a man whose father I wished to be."

* It has been already observed, that madame d'Huxelles had entered into a regular correspondence of news with M. de la Garde.

she should be indebted to me for once for that pleasure. I cannot yet reconcile myself to the not seeing you below stairs as usual.

LETTER DCCXCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, October 29, 1688.

We are impatiently waiting for letters from you this evening, and in truth most of our time is taken up in writing to each other; Sunday alone is a day of respite. All our conversation turns upon you, and you can never receive truer praise than what is given you by all those who have had an opportunity of observing the many important things you have done for your family, but we are particularly charmed with the affair of the law-suit. I would go on, but the fear of wounding your modesty stops my pen, and I shall only say, as Voiture does to the prince: "If you knew with how little respect or fear of offending you, we abandon the reins to our admiration, you would be obliged to confess, that we sin with our eyes open, and, consequently, that not one of your many amiable qualities is lost upon us." We earnestly hope that you will infuse some portion of them into your daughter; you can do nothing more advantageous for her; tell her then, what it is proper for her to do, as I have often heard you tell your son; there is no doubt that she will quickly profit by your advice; by the answers she makes, she appears to have no common share of wit and vivacity, which, added to the earnest desire she shows of pleasing you, makes her a pretty mass of wax, capable of receiving any impression you shall please to stamp upon it. This cannot fail of affording you great amusement, and is an occu-

pation truly worthy of you, both in the eyes of God and man.

It is our opinion, that if M. de Grignan is to make any stay at Avignon, it would not be amiss for you to accompany him thither, in order to avoid the trouble and expense of double visits; but we are sensible how random all advice at such a distance must necessarily be, and are sure that you will take such measures as are most proper. The chevalier is unable to use his right hand, he will not be able to write for a long time; I have offered myself to be his secretary.

I have sent you letters from your son of the twenty-second of this month; you will find great comfort in the care that is taken to preserve a life so precious to you; you will also see how these two volunteers suffered for their vapouring: fair and softly goes far. Write a line or two to M. Courtin; he has lost his son, who was killed by one of our own party in the night, mistaking him for an enemy.

Adieu, my ever dear, and ever lovely; I was yesterday at madame de la Fayette's, where the princess came in just as we were talking of a compliment paid by one of the courtiers to the king, who said, "Your majesty kills wolves like his highness, and his highness takes towns like your majesty." If this same Philipsburg was but off our hands, we could tell you a thousand droll stories. I embrace all the Grignans. I think Paulina is greatly advanced, to read the Metamorphoses; she will now be fairly rid of *la Guide des Pecheurs* (the Sinner's Guide); take my advice then, my dear, and boldly put into her hands the Moral Essays.

LETTER DCCC.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, November 1, (All-Saints' day,) 1688.

It is so long since I passed this holiday here, that I am quite astonished at it. We shall this evening have a concert of bells, which will highly delight Corbinelli, and which I shall bear with, because I have not my usual gaiety. We are so intent upon the reduction of Philipsburg, that I would not absent myself from the centre of news; and I am not a little mortified, my dear child, when I reflect how much you are left to the mercy of your imagination, which is the most tormenting company you can possibly have. M. de Vauban has written to desire his majesty to think of some person for governor of this important conquest. We are in hopes that the place will be ours to-day*, as well for the pleasure of the surprise, as to do honour to the nativity of the dauphin†. Enclosed are letters from your son, who has just quitted the trenches. Monseigneur is there every day: the marquis is in good spirits; he has written very prettily to *Martillac*; I wish she was with you.

I am very uneasy about the chevalier; the gout teazes him sometimes in one hand, sometimes in the other; and he has other frequent pains by day, and sleepless nights. I do all in my power to comfort him, but my cares fall very short of those he has been accustomed to receive from you. We eat together in the

* Philipsburg capitulated October 29, and the garrison evacuated it November 1.

† Born November 1, 1661.

same little room; it seems a cell destined for my residence. Coffee is quite in disgrace; the chevalier thinks it heats him, and puts his blood in a ferment; and I, who, you know, always follow the lead, have likewise rejected it; rice-gruel supplies its place, and I keep coffee for the winter.

You do not say a word to me of your own health; I am terribly afraid of your nights, and the surprise of the air of Grignan. How uncivil has this north-east wind, which made you swallow so much powder, been to you! this is not the way in which you ought to have been received by it: in short, I tremble for your health; mine is perfectly restored. I sleep much better than I did; I have no longer so bad a tongue, and am in all respects like other people. There are certain times and seasons, days and nights, that cannot easily be got over: but, after all, though I cannot absolutely be comforted, nor recover what I have lost, I come round again by the help of a good constitution; this is exactly the case with me at present, as much so as if I were young. I have a glimmering prospect of coming to see you, and that is my support.

I fancy the proroguing of the assembly of your states has quite disconcerted your measures; if so, you will be, as I wished, out of the air of Grignan. You know I proposed your going to La Garde, to avoid that building mania, which made every body ill at Mammenon. I imagine the coadjutor's building will go on pretty well, but that at Carcassonne will plague you all the summer. This is an unfortunate circumstance.

The abbé Bigorré is, truly speaking, the best friend, and the most agreeable tenant, that can be wished; the chevalier is highly satisfied with him. Mademoiselle de Meri meets with some company here, but her apart-

ment causes us many a heart-ache†. What do you do with Paulina? How is it you do not take her with you? I have given a description of her to madame de la Fayette, who thinks it impossible for you not to love her. She advises you to watch her turn of mind, and to manage it by your own excellent judgement. She greatly approves of your holding frequent conversations with her, of letting her read to you, walk with you, listen to you, and of furnishing her with every opportunity of exercising her mind and her memory.

Madame de Lavardin is extremely happy that poor Jarzé is out of danger; his mother and wife are here, and think it some comfort, under their misfortune, that he will now, at least, live with them quietly at home, or with his friends in Provence, or at Paris. I think we shall undertake no siege after that of Philipsburg; I am of your opinion, that it is doing quite enough before seventeen years of age‡. Sanzei is with the army as well as the rest. Adieu, my dearest! Do not believe that we can ever cease to regret you, or reconcile ourselves to the want of your enlivening presence in this mansion.

LETTER * DCCCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, All-Saints' day, 1688, nine o'clock at night.

Philipsburg is taken, and your son is well! I have only to turn this phrase in every possible way, for I will not change my text. Learn then again from this note, that

† Mademoiselle de Meri occupied the apartment which was the countess de Grignan's.

‡ The marquis de Grignan was born in November 1671.

your son is well, and that Philipsburg is taken! A courier is just arrived at M. de Villacerf's, who says that the dauphin's courier reached Fontainbleau while father Gaillard was preaching; and that the sermon was immediately interrupted, and thanks returned to God for this brilliant achievement. No further particulars are known, except that there was no assault, and that M. du Plessis was right when he said, the governor had ordered waggons to carry away his equipage. Recover your breath, then, my dear child, and let the first thing you do, be to return thanks to God: no other siege is talked of; rejoice that your son has witnessed that of Philipsburg; it is an admirable period for him: it is the dauphin's first campaign. Would you not have been grieved, if he had been the only person of his age who was not present on this occasion, in which all the rest glory? But let us not look back; every thing has happened as we could have wished. It is you, my dear count, we may thank for it: I congratulate you on the joy you must experience, and beg my compliments also to the coadjutor: you are all relieved from great anxiety. Sleep soundly then, my beautiful love, sleep soundly, on the assurance we give you; if you are covetous of grief, as we formerly said, seek some other occasion, for God has preserved your dear child to you: we are in raptures, and in this feeling I embrace you with an affection that I believe you cannot doubt.

LETTER * DCCCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, November 3, 1688.

Your heart must be now at ease; you will receive no letters that do not contain assurance of the health of your dear child. Yield a little to the delight of being no longer subject to the agonies arising from the just apprehension of a danger that is past; think of the pleasure your son will receive in his attendance at court, and in having been present at the first occasion on which the dauphin performed the part of conqueror; you see more clearly than I do all the advantages of this era. It is to be hoped that the chevalier will be able to go to court: the ill state of his health is one of your misfortunes. This pain, which runs about him like a mouse, first to one hand, then to the other, is to-day settled in his knee, and has prevented him from dining at Dangeau's, as he intended yesterday: this is mortifying; but as the pain is not violent, if he can at last reach Versailles, it is from him, my dear child, you will receive real service, supported by the marquis, who is a little man of consequence, and has done his duty as well as any one in this campaign. He is cool, courageous, and persevering; he amused himself the other day with pointing two field-pieces, as if he had only been firing at a target at Livri.

Speaking of Livri, I must not omit to tell you, that you may see there are wounded every where, that as M. de Méli was shooting a few days ago in our forest, as he has been accustomed to do, his gun burst in his hand, and shattered it in so dreadful a manner, that it has been necessary to amputate the arm close to the

elbow, like poor Jarzé's. He is hard by at madame Sanguin's: I thought it due to Livri, not to omit this story. The one I have to relate of father Gaillard is more entertaining: He was preaching on All Saints' day: M. de Louvois brought word that Philipsburg was taken: the king made a sign; father Gaillard was silent; when his majesty, proclaiming the news aloud, fell upon his knees to return thanks to God; the preacher then resumed his discourse, and by happily introducing Philipsburg, the dauphin, the king's good fortune, and the grace of God displayed in his person and in all his undertakings, composed so excellent a dish, that he brought the whole audience to tears: the king and the court admired and praised it highly; he received a thousand compliments; in short, the humility of a Jesuit must have been fully satisfied.

I am very much pleased with M. de Vendome's reply for M. d'Aix *: "Since the governor wishes it, his deputy must wish it too." Madame de la Fayette told me again the day before yesterday, that she was delighted with the noble and disinterested manner in which M. de Grignan discussed this subject at her house. You see he took the right side, and that he even left the business to M. d'Aix to unravel for himself: this dexterity precludes the possibility of his having a shadow of dissatisfaction. You will tell me a little of the news of your assembly.

Your Suzes will soon see me here; they are as much pleased with madame de Lavardin as you are. The count de Grammont interests himself for M. de Gordes with all his might and main; M. de Langres † acts his part well in this affair; he has given up his nephew to them: "Take him sir, here he is; make him wise enough

* Daniel de Cosnac, archbishop of Aix, formerly bishop of Valence.

† Louis M. de Simiane de Gordes, bishop of Langres.

to understand how fortunate he will be in marrying your daughter: I wish nothing better, I love my name and my family; do what you can." Upon this, the count and his lady go to the lad, who is at Chaillot, in a small house belonging to M. de Vivonne: they converse with him, but he possesses two things in a sovereign degree, distrust and indecision; he accordingly wanders from the point every moment: notwithstanding this, they persevere in their project; but they will not see the end of it, till they can find out a way to bind the wind, and fix the quicksilver. It is not so difficult to stop poor madame de S****. How I pity her; to be, at her age, and with ten children, still tormented with turbulent passions! it is her destiny. Adieu, my best beloved; this is a long conversation, for so our letters may be called: if it tires you I shall be sorry, for I have written it with good will and *currente calamo*.

LETTER * DCCCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, November 5, 1688.

I TOOK medicine yesterday after the manner of my capuchins, to purify my health, or cleanse it from alloy, and I am now perfectly well. I was grieved not to see you take possession of my room, as usual, early in the morning, asking me a thousand questions, cross examining me, and managing and assisting upon the slightest appearance of indisposition. Oh, my dear child, how sweet, how gratifying, are these attentions! how deeply have I sighed at being deprived of such convincing proofs of your affection! and the coffee you drank with me; and your toilet which used to be brought; and your morning visitors, who sought out and followed

you, and against whom my curtain served me for a barricado! To lose you, my child, is a loss indeed; no one ever threw such charms into affection as you do; I still tell you, you spoil the trade; every thing is flat, every thing insipid, that comes after you. It was thus M. de la Garde formerly spoke of you, and I believed that, on some occasions, you had cruelly concealed these treasures from me: but you have discovered them without reserve: I know the excellence of your heart, which is full of tenderness for me: this is a happiness with which you mean to comfort the last days of my existence, and which is only crossed by your absence: but absence will have an end, and your affection will last for ever.

The chevalier has been to see me; he went away with the pain we spoke of the other day in his foot: it is a great mortification to him, and a great misfortune for you: of what service might he not be to you at Versailles, both with regard to your son, and your own affairs! We must not, however, dwell upon this: it is the will of God: but for that thought, what could we do? Mademoiselle de Meri would needs nurse me the other day, but was so indisposed, that she was obliged to fly from her charge. In this way our poor house is sometimes converted into an hospital. In reality, the abbé Bigorré is the comfort of all the different apartments: I was willing to tell you all this while expecting your letters.

Five o'clock in the evening.

The weather is tremendous. Your letters are not arrived. I am in the chevalier's apartment; I, poor I, am nursing him; he is in bed; he will write to you, however, for his pain is now in the knee: he flatters himself that he shall soon get rid of it. We talked just

now of your son; we shall expect him here. It does not appear to us necessary that the marquis should go to Provence: it would be a useless expense: it is better that he should make the most this winter of his glorious campaign. We think also that M. du P[illegible], with a thousand good qualities, will be a dead weight upon your purse, and of no use to the marquis; the governor is scarcely wanted at court, and still less with the army. To-morrow, my dear child, your heart will expand with joy; for you will learn officially that *Philipsburg is taken, and that your son is well.* It is not doubted here that Manheim will surrender without a word. Sleep in comfort then, and begin to put all your good resolutions in practice without delay.

It is said that the prince of Orange is embarked, and that firing has been heard; but the same thing has been said so often, that I do not answer for its truth. Adieu, my dear, my beloved child; the more we see of the sentiments of others, the more we are charmed with yours: I do not allude to Britany; I am perfectly satisfied there: but I will some day relate to you a little piece of ingratitude, which I have mentioned to the chevalier, and of which, having unburthened my heart, I shall think no more. Madame de Castries has just left me, she sends you a thousand congratulations on the happy termination of the affair at Philipsburg.

LETTER *DCCCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, November 8, 1688.

This is the day, my dear child, on which you are to begin your journey; we follow you step by step. The weather is delightful; the Durance will not be so terrific as it sometimes is. It looks as if you were resolved to remove farther and farther from us out of mere spite: you will find yourself at last on the sea-shore. But it is the will of God, that we should meet with periods in our life, which are difficult to bear; and we must endeavour to repair, by a submission to his will, the too great sensibility we feel towards earthly things. In this respect, it is impossible to be more culpable than I am.

The chevalier is much better. It is painful to reflect that the weather which agrees with him, is precisely what may dethrone the king of England; whereas he suffered dreadfully a few days ago, when the wind and tempests were dispersing the fleet of the prince of Orange: he is unhappy at not being able to make his health accord with the good of Europe; for the sentiment of joy is universal at the failure of the prince, whose wife † is a perfect Tullia: ah, how boldly would she drive over the body of her father! She has empowered her husband to take possession of the kingdom of England, of which she calls herself the heiress; and if her husband is killed, for her imagination is not very

† Mary Stuart, daughter of James II., king of England, and wife of William-Henry of Nassau, prince of Orange, afterwards king of England by the name of William III. Tullia, the daughter of Servius Tullus, king of Rome, caused her chariot to drive over the bleeding body of her father, who had just been assassinated.

delicate, M. de Schomberg* is to take possession o for herself. What say you to a hero, who so sadly graces the close of a glorious life? He saw the a ral's ship sink in which he was to have embarked; as the prince and he were the last in following the which was under weigh in the finest weather pos they were obliged, by a tremendous storm that sud arose, to return to port, the prince being very much indisposed with his asthma, and M. de Schomberg as much vexed. Only twenty-six sail returned with them: the rest were all dispersed, some towards Norway, others towards Boulogne. M. d'Aumont has sent a courier to the king, to inform him that vessels had been seen at the mercy of the winds, and that there were many appearances of shipwreck. A vessel armed *en flute*, in which were nine hundred men, sunk in sight of the prince of Orange. In short, the hand of God is visible upon this fleet: many ships may return, but it will be long before they will be able to do any mischief, for the dispersion has certainly been great, and has happened at a time when it was least expected: this is certainly a stroke of Providence. I need not say so much to you of this great news, for the papers are full of it; but as we are so too, and as we can talk of nothing else, it flows naturally from my pen.

Shall I give you another instance of wounds that were

* Frederic Armand, count de Schomberg, marshal of France, obtained permission to retire from the king's service in 1685, on account of his having embraced the protestant religion. He was minister of state, and generalissimo of the armies, of the elector of Brandenbourg, and went over to England in 1685 with the prince of Orange.

Marshal de Schomberg had ancient leagues with the princes of Orange. He had, besides, much cause to complain of the court, and even of Turenne, during the war with Holland. See a curious account of this general in the *Fragmens Historiques de Racine.*

not received at the siege of Philipsburg? It relates to the chevalier de Longueville: the town was taken: the dauphin had just inspected the garrison, the little chevalier mounted the back of the trenches to look at something, when a soldier, aiming at a woodcock, shot this poor child, and he died in consequence the next day: his death is as singular as his birth*. Méli, whom I mentioned to you, whose arm was obliged to be amputated, is since dead at madame Sanguin's. This is news for the marquis, notwithstanding the little interest he now takes in our poor Livri. Your remembrance of it is flattering to the attachment I have had for this delightful spot, and my regret at losing it. M. de la Bazinière is dead of a mortification in his leg, but he died like a Mars: he has soon followed his daughter†, of whom he still complained even after her death.

I wish very much to know how you feel at being again away from me. You cannot regret Grignan in the state in which you left it. I can easily believe that the chevalier is anxious to finish his building, and that M. de Carcassonne will be a long, long time, in completing his: you bear all this with wonderful patience; I could talk upon the subject for a year. I have written to M. de la Garde, to thank him from my heart for the affectionate and faithful friendship he bears you; there is no fear of his constancy: it is not so easy to be quit of you and Paulina, for whom he seems to entertain also a real affection. Be not uneasy respecting my health, it is excellent; pity me only for having lost my dear child, whose society afforded me pleasure and occupation, and without whom my life is a vacuum.

* Charles-Louis d'Orleans, natural son of Charles Paris d'Orleans, duke of Longueville, killed in crossing the Rhine in 1672.

† Wife of Jean Jacques de Mesmes, president à mortier in the parliament of Paris.

Present my compliments to M. d'Aix, merely to see whether he will remember me. I suppose, as M. de Vendôme has determined the business, there can be no dispute; you must live in peace, and enjoy his excellent and animated conversation *: a different line of conduct would only afford amusement to your Provençaux, and would do you no service either in the country or at court. Madame de la Fayette thinks M. de Grignan acted very wisely in treating this affair with the noble indifference he displayed at her house, by which he has lost nothing. She entreats him and M. d'Aix, and you too, my beauty, to live in that country, like persons belonging to the court, who have met, and may meet again, at Versailles. A thousand remembrances to the dear count, and our coadjutor; and if you will embrace Paulina for me, you will give her great pleasure; for I am sure she adores you: that is the way in which you are loved by every body.

* The following is a portrait of this bishop, by the abbé Choisy: "He is a man of singular vivacity; his eloquence is such, that it does not permit the truth of what he says to be doubted, though he says so much that all cannot be true. His conversation is fascinating, and of a loquacity that is very amusing to those who observe only, and have no business to transact with him. He came to Grenoble one day to see madame de la Baume; speaking of herself, she said to him, that when a woman is drawing towards her fiftieth year, she ought to think of nothing but her health. 'Say, madam,' continued M. de Valence, 'when she has passed it.'"

LETTER * DCCCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, November 10. 1688.

THE affectionate remembrance you retain for our little abbey goes straight to my heart: it seems to me as if your attachment to that place were a branch of your love for me. The chevalier affronted us highly the last time we were there: in spite of all he had written, signed, and sealed, upon the beauty of the place, there was only the show of courtesy between them; for in reality he did not like it; and the evening dews on their side did not pay much respect to him; so that we had always this subject of complaint: but alas! my beloved, this is but too certainly at an end for our happiness.

I think the chevalier's health will permit him to go to Versailles: it will be a great thing for you and for your son, who will soon return there. Sleep soundly then, my child, and agitate yourself no longer: every thing has turned out well, both with regard to the safety and the rising reputation of the marquis. The chevalier has told you all the fine things M. de Montague says of him. This is precisely what you wished: before the age of seventeen he is an old soldier, a volunteer who has witnessed a glorious siege, and a captain of light horse: but it is odd that it should be you who raised this company; without you it would have been nothing: your talents are great in every way; you do not confine them to the knowledge how to conduct a lawsuit.

Poor St. Aubin is wasting away so rapidly, that his

end draws near. I spent part of yesterday with him, accompanied by mademoiselle de Grignan; and going after dinner to Prévanes, to pay my respect St. Martin: nothing can exceed the beauty of the weather: madame de Coulanges has been wishing for it these six weeks, but I had Philipsburg to take; I shall now be there for a few days, and shall receive your letters and write to you there. I shall walk a little; by exercise I shall give rest to my body and mind, which have suffered much, both on your account and your son's. I am perfectly well; I have taken medicine, and followed your wishes in every respect; I wish I could be certain you were in as good health as I am, and that the air of Provence did not disagree with you. Tell me truly how you are, and whether so much anxiety, and so many sleepless nights, have not made you thin again. Madame de la Fayette desires you to love Paulina; she sees plainly, she says, that this child is handsome, and wishes, with madame de Lavardin, that you may not refuse a good offer: they both embrace you. The marquis de Jarzé is well: I condemn him to leave the army and live quietly at home: what can a man do who has only his left hand, with which he holds the bridle of his horse, and nothing on the other side to defend himself with? I shall not answer all you say on the subject of writing; can you suppose I take less pleasure than you do in our conversations? it relieves me from the fatigue of other letters when I write to you. I entreat M. de Grignan to be always as wise as he is at present, and the coadjutor to finish his building: he told me, when he was here, that nothing had so good an appearance for his family, as to be building during a law-suit: I did not agree to this, but the disgrace of leaving it unfinished would have a bad appearance indeed.

LETTER *DCCCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Brévanes†, Friday evening, November 11, 1688.

I ARRIVED here, my beautiful love, last evening: an excellent season, you will say, for visiting the country! but it is better to take advantage of this short moment, in which I have the pleasure of exercise, after being shut up for a year, than to lose it entirely. I do not repent having staid so long in Paris, because I had to take Philipsburg, and to save our child from the dangers of the siege, which was business sufficient. As I have now nothing to do but to show my gratitude to Heaven for the marquis's safety, and the restoration of your peace of mind, I am come to this delightful country to offer up my thanksgivings, and I shall spend some days here. I believe I drew on the chevalier ill luck, by my assiduity in wishing him good health; for the moment my back was turned, he was able to dine at the abbé Têtu's; this has given me real pleasure: I know how much he wishes to go to Versailles, and this is the way thither. Madame de Coulanges is still more pleasing here than at Paris; she truly enjoys the country: I know not where she acquired this taste, which appears natural to her. *Fais ce que tu voudras* (do as you please), is the motto here; and it so happens, that we please to walk a great deal, for the weather is very fine: we read, remain alone, say our prayers, meet again, and live sumptuously; I have only been here four-and-twenty hours, but I can judge by the sample I have seen.

† A beautiful country-house belonging to the duke de Chaulnes, four leagues from Paris.

I expect a letter from you to-morrow: not the one I am most anxious to receive, which is an answer to that respecting the conquest of Philipsburg; I long to see your heart dilated with joy, and in a state of tranquillity to which it has been a stranger for these two months. You are now at Lambesc, my beloved countess. How does this additional distance renew the pangs of separation! If you had been placed an hour ago, by enchantment, behind the palisadoes here, your modesty would have been very much embarrassed by all madame de Coulanges and I said of you, which I cannot repeat. Adieu, my amiable and best beloved: it is a sad thing to be at such a distance from a dear child. I am going to purchase the *Règles de la Vie Chretienne*, by M. de Tourneux*: this book makes a great noise: I shall perhaps find in it the means of being more submissive to the decrees of Providence.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES.

MADAME de Sévigné is no better than a step-mother, madam: she has not been to Philipsburg with your son, having contented herself with taking up her abode at the post-office, that she might be ready on the arrival of the couriers. I am delighted at the true distinction that has been paid to the pretty *babe in swaddling-clothes*†, whom I saw at Grignan: he is wonderfully well, and I have received pleasure from the circumstance, which must not be placed wholly to your account, for I love and esteem good and solid qualities. M. de Montgivaut has informed me, that he found you

* Rules for a Christian Life, a posthumous work of M. de Tourneux, which appeared in 1688, and has since passed through several editions.

† Madame de Coulanges, who had only seen the marquis de Grignan when an infant, still called him, the babe in swaddling-clothes.

as beautiful as the day; I am afraid you will not be so sensible to the praise of yourself as to the praise of your son: it is sometimes very pleasant to be a mother, and especially at the end of a siege. Do not forget, my dear madam, that I respect you highly.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

This pretty woman can neither be silent on the subject of *the babe in swaddling-clothes,* nor of his mother: but it is the fashion to praise you. Adieu, my beloved.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES TO THE COUNT DE GRIGNAN.

Did you not also take some interest, sir, in the marquis de Grignan? In this case, permit me to tell you how sincerely I rejoice at his good fortune and his renown: it would be impossible to rejoice for the one without the other.

LETTER * DCCCVII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, November 13, 1688.

I have been so occupied, my dear cousin, with the siege of Philipsburg, that in reality, I have not had a moment's time to write to you. Every thing was at such a stand with me, that I was like those whose application almost deprives them of the power of breathing. Thank God, the deed is done: I sigh like M. de la Touche, I breathe freely. And do you know why I was so interested? because the little marquis de Grignan was there. Think what it must be to have a child of seventeen years of age at such a place, a child that has scarcely left the wing of his mother, who still trem-

bled with apprehension, lest he should catch cold. She was suddenly compelled to part with him, to send him to Philipsburg, and, with unheard of cruelty to herself, was obliged to set out for Provence with her husband, and thus to remove from the theatre of news, to which we cannot be too near; and, in short, for a whole fortnight she was obliged to turn her back, and not take a single step that did not remove her still farther from her son, and the means of hearing from him. I shudder myself while I write this to you, and I am sure, that, loving the countess as you love her (for you well know that you do love her), you will feel for her situation. God, it is true, comforts her under her affliction, by the happiness of knowing at present that her son is in good health. She will be six days longer in suspense than we are: such are the evils of distance. This good place at length is taken. The dauphin has performed miracles of firmness, ability, generosity, and humanity; scattering money with judgement, speaking highly of the services of his soldiers, rendering a thousand kind offices, asking rewards, and writing letters to the king, which have been the admiration of the whole court. This has been a noble campaign; the whole Palatinate, and almost all the Rhine, is our own: these are good winter-quarters: with these we can wait quietly for the resolutions of the emperor, and the prince of Orange. The latter is supposed to be embarked: but the wind is so good a catholic, that he has not yet been able to sail. It is said M. de Schomberg is with him. This is a great misfortune for the marshal and for us. The affairs of Rome are still in a bad train.

LETTER * DCCCVIII.

THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, November 14, 1688.

I so well knew how much you were occupied at Philipsburg, madam, that I have not written to you since the opening of the trenches. I enter easily into your fears for this monkey de Grignan, and your grief at the absence of his mother. M. d'Autun told me, that you wrote to him a few days ago, and that he did not find in your letter the gaiety, which renders your letters, in general, so entertaining. I replied, that your anxiety for the little de Grignan, and your grief at the departure of the beautiful countess, left you nothing of yourself but your good sense, a good sense without grace or ornament, but which resembled a sick beauty, in whom we still recognise handsome features. I have entered into all the sorrows and uneasiness of the lovely Provençale on your account, and that of her son; but she is, at length, delivered from a part of her evils; and with a little patience, she will be quit of the rest.

LETTER * DCCCIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Brévanes, Monday, November 15, 1688.

I BEGIN this letter at Brévanes, and shall finish it at Paris, where I am going to dine with madame de Coulanges. She is going there to see madame de Bagnols; and I, my beloved, to visit poor St. Aubin, who is so reduced, that he cannot recover. We shall return

again in the evening, and shall stay three or four days longer; which may be called finishing the business handsomely with the first president of the cour des aides (Le Camus), who has a beautiful house just by, as we formerly did at Livri. I shall see the chevalier de Grignan, and learn all particulars respecting you; he will give me your letters,—we had none on Thursday; and, after hearing how he is, I shall go back and finish my country excursion. I calculate that you have been at Lambesc* since Thursday, St. Martin's day: Friday M. de Grignan will have made his speech, pray let me have it; and M. d'Aix† will have taken his chair of state. I am always with you, let me be where I may; but as I am not a philosopher, like Descartes, I cannot but feel that all this is in idea, and that you are really absent: are you not of the same opinion, though a disciple of this great man?

Paris, five o'clock in the evening.

I am not returned to Brévanes with madame de Coulanges, my dear countess; I found my poor St. Aubin too near the great journey into eternity; and I have therefore put a stop to mine, to attend to what I owe to a person whom I have always loved. He was affected at seeing me, at least as much so as it is possible to be at the faubourg St. Jacques‡; he held my hand a long

* On account of the assembly of the states which was held there.

† The archbishops of Aix are, by birth, the first attorneys of Provence, and in this capacity they presided at the assembly of the states, unless the archbishop of Aix should be at the same time a cardinal, which was the case with M. de Grimaldi, before M. de Cosnac. It is easily understood that this was for the sake of form; and that it was for this reason, M. de Marseilles and the coadjutor presided alternately at this assembly.

‡ A place where devotion was carried to such an extreme, that it was

time, and said a great many devout and affectionate things to me, which made my eyes overflow with tears. The opportunity should not be neglected of seeing a man die in peace and christian-like composure, with a perfect indifference to the world, charity towards man, an earnest desire to be in heaven united for ever to God, and a pious dread of judgement, with a confidence founded on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ: all this is divine. It is of such persons we should learn to die, particularly when we have not been happy enough to wish to live.

I am returned home, and have made my excuses to madame de Coulanges, who accepted them very unwillingly. The chevalier set out yesterday for Versailles: he sent me two of your letters this morning to Brévanes: I am certain there must be one in which you speak of your joy at the taking of Philipsburg: but be equally delighted, my dear, at the taking of Manheim, since our child ran a greater risk there than at Philipsburg, and be glad that he has only received a slight contusion on the thigh, after which he wrote me the letter I enclose you, by which you will see that he is fortunate in having escaped so well. The dauphin has mentioned this contusion to the king, and Dangeau has written word of it to the chevalier, congratulating him upon the event. The chevalier immediately set off to Versailles: I am convinced he will return this evening to write to you, and inform you how he has made his court; but if he should not return this evening, be not uneasy respecting your child, for you see that he is well, and has been very fortunate. You must place this contusion in the list of all the other lucky incidents

supposed incompatible with the love of God to retain any affection for his creatures.

that have happened to him before he completed his seventeenth year, for after to-morrow it will be too late. Thank God, my dear child, and you also, my dear count, upon the assurance I give you: you both have reason to do so. Madame de Montchevreuil, who has lost her son †, and madame de Nesle, who will lose her husband, must envy you. The abbé Bigorré has this moment told me, that the marquis de Nesle is dead: he sends his compliments to you, and so does Corbinelli, on your son's contusion: the circumstance of being on the thigh makes it of consequence. Adieu, my dear love; I am again stationary at Paris, after an absence of four days in the country, in which the fine weather and the exercise I took were of service to me; but God did not permit that I should enjoy this little pleasure long.

LETTER * DCCCX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, November 17, 1688.

To-day our marquis completes his seventeenth year. To what constitutes his introduction into life, we must add a very good little contusion, which does him, I assure you, great honour, from the cool and composed manner in which he received it. The chevalier will inform you how M. de St. Maur reported it to the king: he is overwhelmed with compliments at Versailles, and I am so here. Madame de Lavardin desired me to meet her yesterday at madame de la Fayette's: they both congratulated me: the latter said to me, with an air of triumph, the moment she saw me: "Well, what will ma-

† The count de Morné, killed at the battle of Manheim.

dame de Grignan have to find fault with now? Tell her she ought to be delighted; that if such a thing could be purchased, no price would be too great for it; and that, in short, she is too happy." I promised to inform you of this, and I do it with pleasure. Receive also the sincere congratulations of madame de Lavardin, of madame de Coulanges, the duchess du Lude, the *Divinities**, the duchess de Villeroi, and father Moret†, whom I saw afterwards, as I went to visit poor St. Aubin. My dear child, the pious wish of this good man to die has made him hasten all the sacraments: the curé of St. Jacques would not give him extreme unction yesterday, which was a source of great grief to him; he wishes for nothing but death, and longs to be united to God: his calmness, resignation, tranquillity, and detachment from the world, are beyond any thing I have ever witnessed, and almost supernatural. The relief he has found in father Moret and his curé, who are his directors, his friends, his nurses, and his physicians, is by no means common, and has given him a foretaste of heaven. Duchêne is his physician: he is an excellent creature: he does not torment you, does not dose you with medicines: "Try, sir, to perspire, and have patience." There is no noise in the room, no confusion, no offensive smell: the patient has no fever, except what is internal and imperceptible; his head is clear; he is silent himself on account of the load upon his chest, but he listens to rational and good discourse in which there is no trifling: this is divine, and what is seldom witnessed. He thinks himself, poor man, unworthy to die in the same place‡ where madame de

* Madame de Frontenac and mademoiselle d'Outrelaise.

† A celebrated director of the Oratory.

‡ A large house adjoining the Carmelites of the faubourg St. Jacques, which madame de Longueville occupied, and where, it is well known,

Longueville died. I told all this to Treville*, who was at madame de la Fayette's; he replied, "This is the way in which every one dies at that place." Duchêne does not think it will be over soon. How much, my dear child, you would be affected at this holy spectacle! I do not say with grief, but with consolation and envy. St. Aubin has evinced great regard both for me and for you in his interest for your son; but all this is momentary only, and he constantly returns to Jesus Christ and his mercy, which are his chief concern. But I must not overwhelm you with this melancholy recital. I wished to thank you, and that from my heart, for having taken the longest road to avoid the little streams which have swelled into rivers: do always thus, and not trust to the uncertainty of an enterprise, for which there is no remedy when you have one foot in the water. Think of M. de la Vergne†, and, if you please, of me; but promise always to take the longest and safest way: there is no comparison between impatience and drowning. Was not Paulina with you

she died, like a true Christian, on the 15th April, 1679, after a penitence of twenty-seven years. See the Letter dated April 12, 1680.

* Henry Joseph de Reyre, count de Treville, or Troisville, after the greatest success in war and at court, retired from the world for the purposes of study and devotion. He spoke with so much perspicuity and energy, that it is supposed the proverb, *he speaks like a book*, was made for him. He had as much openness of character as wit and eloquence. The witticism madame de Sévigné puts in the mouth of M. de la Rochefoucault, "He is a man made of a whole piece; he has no joints," was said by Bossuet of M. de Treville, who replied, when it was repeated to him, "If I have no joints, he has no bones;" thus calling to mind the singular pliancy Bossuet had displayed, as a prelate and a theologian.

† The abbé de la Vergne Tressan, as distinguished by his virtues and his piety, as by his birth and talents, was washed away in his litter in crossing the Gardon, a deep little river, and drowned through the imprudence and obstinacy of his muleteer, in 1684.

in this litter? did her little face weary you? You cut me very short sometimes, in particulars I wish to be informed of: you think I shall, on that account, write the less: by no means, my dearest; I do not govern myself by you. Your brother is at St. Brieux, at the wedding of mademoiselle de la Coste: M. de Chaulnes was there; but for the presence of this governor, the bridegroom would have flown. I feel as if I had a great many excuses to make you for the siege of Manheim: I was so positively assured that it would be nothing, that I hoped to make you pass it insensibly: but it is over, and if you had been mistress of the event, could it have proved more favourable to your wishes? Endeavour then to sleep soundly; I answer to you for the rest. The fable of the Hare* appears to me very applicable to your situation. "There is no genuine peace; some new assault is always at hand." You might also add: "Correct yourself! some wise head will exclaim, Correct yourself!—Alas, as if fear could be corrected!" But you cannot say, with another part of the fable, "I believe that men possess, in reality, as much fear as I do:" for I think men have no fear at all.

The archbishop's is a happy old age; I consider myself honoured by his remembrance. I shall attack the coadjutor some day; I shall tell him of our good management at Paris: I am delighted that he loves you, more for his sake than your own; for it would be a bad sign, for his understanding and his taste, if he did not estimate you properly. I love Paulina: you describe her as blooming and good-humoured: I see her running every where, and telling every body of the conquest of Philipsburg; I see her and embrace her; love, my dear child, love your daughter; it is the most

* She alludes to La Fontaine's fable of the Hare and the Frogs.

rational and delightful occupation in the world; but continue to love your dear mamma also, who is more yours than her own.

M. de Bailli is just gone from hence: he stammered out a thousand kind things for you, but with so much cordiality, that you must be obliged to him. My dear count, I must say one word to you respecting our little boy. This campaign was your work; you have great reason to be satisfied; every thing tends to convince you that you did well. I feel both your joy and my own. I do not say it to flatter you, but every one speaks highly of your son: his perseverance, coolness, intrepidity, and almost his rashness, are applauded.

LETTER * DCCCXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, November 19, 1688.

I SHALL continue the pious and tragical story of poor St. Aubin. They came to tell me, on Wednesday last, immediately after I had written to you, that he had received extreme unction: I ran to him with M. de Coulanges; I found him very ill, but so perfectly collected in mind, and with so little appearance of fever, that I could not believe he was at the point of death: he had even a facility in coughing, which gave hopes to those who do not know that this is a sign of the entire corruption of the mass of blood, which changes gradually, and at length destroys the sufferer. I found again the same calmness, the same affection, the same gratitude, in this poor invalid; and in the midst of all, a constant looking to God, and an unceasing and ardent prayer to Jesus Christ, imploring pardon through his precious blood. The two excellent men I mentioned were with

him, and staid with him to the last. The Miserere was said, to which he showed his attention by his eyes and gestures. He made the proper responses to the extreme unction, and asked for a paraphrase of it. At length, at nine at night, he desired me to leave him, bidding me distinctly a last adieu. Father Moret remained with him, and I have heard, that at midnight he had a terrible fit: the machine was deranged; he afterwards vomited, as if nature still sought relief: he sweated profusely, as in a crisis, and then fell into a dose, which was interrupted only by father Moret, who, holding him in his arms, and the dying man answering still with gratitude and love to God, at length received his last breath, and passed the rest of the night *in piously lamenting him, and praying for his soul.* The cries of his wife were calmed, and her tears dried up, by this good father; so that there was nothing that was not truly Christian in this holy habitation. I was there the next day, which was yesterday; he was not at all changed; he excited neither in me, nor in any one who saw him, the least horror: he was one of the elect: we venerate the grace of God, which was so visible in him. His will was read; nothing can be more just, nothing better-written: he makes an excuse for having sunk his property in an annuity, which was occasioned by the want of the means of subsistence; he yielded, he says, to the temptation of giving eleven thousand francs, that he might end his life comfortably, and die in the holy society of the Carmelites; he speaks well of his wife, and praises her attentions and assiduity: he desires M. de Coulanges to take care of her, and wishes his goods to be sold to pay a few trifling debts. He praises me too highly, both on the score of my heart, and of our long friendship, commends the care of his wife to me, and speaks of himself and his burial

with a humility so truly Christian, that I was equally pleased and affected. We went this morning to a service performed at St. Jacques solely for him. The hearts of many who were present were touched with the account of his merit and his virtue: madame Foucault, madame Fouquet, M. and madame d'Aguesseau, madame de la Houssaie, madame Le Bossu, mademoiselle de Grignan, Bréauté, and several others. From thence we went to the Carmelites, where he is buried. The clergy received him from the clergy of Saint Jacques: it was a mournful ceremony. All the nuns were in the gallery with torches, and sung the Libera; the corpse was then placed in a deep grave, where it will remain for ever. He is no longer in the world, time no longer exists to him, he has entered upon eternity. To tell you that such a ceremony could be witnessed without tears, is impossible; but they are pleasing tears, their source is not bitter, they are tears of consolation and envy. We saw the mother of the Holy Sacrament; and after having been the niece of the good St. Aubin, I became again the mother of madame de Grignan: the last title restored me so truly to happiness, that Coulanges, who was listening to us, said: "Ah, this is as it should be! How well the ball is kept up!" This lady is highly agreeable: what did she not say of the perfect esteem she bears you, of your law-suit, your talents, your heart, your love for me, the care that ought to be taken of my health in your absence, your courage in leaving your son in the midst of the dangers to which he was to be exposed, his contusion, his rising reputation, and the thanks which were due to God for having preserved him? She introduced me too into all this. But what more, my dear, shall I say? If I were to tell you all, I should never have done: none but the

inhabitants of heaven can be superior to these holy personages.

I found the chevalier returned from Versailles yesterday evening, in good health: I was delighted. When he is here, I take advantage of the charms of his society; when he is there, I am equally pleased, because I know it is for the good of his family. He told me the marquis's contusion was the news at Versailles, and was spoken of in the most agreeable manner possible. He received the compliments of madame de Maintenon, who was informed of the circumstance by the dauphin: the whole court shared the joy; every note I have received here, has been filled with congratulations; and what completes my happiness is, that the dauphin is on the road, and the marquis also: if after this, my dear child, you do not sleep soundly, I really know not what you would have. The chevalier told me nothing but good news all the evening; but he has forbidden me to tell you more than that I feel grateful to Providence for coming to your assistance, just at the time when you were ready to hang yourself, and I was almost ready to consent to it. Adieu, my beloved. Madame de Brancas has just left me; she sends you compliments of all sorts. We expect great news from England, but it is not yet arrived.

LETTER *DCCCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, November 22, 1688.

I have nothing to say of my health, except that it is excellent. The chevalier and I have been paying visits all the day, to madame Ollier, madame Cornuel, madame de Fontenac, madame de Maisons, and M. du Bois, who

has a little hurt in his leg. I said at the *Divinities'*, that if I were entering life instead of quitting it, I should attribute the disappearance of a thousand little complaints, which I formerly had, and which I feel no longer, to this agreeable routine. Keep this in your mind, my dear child; and since you love me, be not ungrateful to God, who preserves your poor mamma in a way, which seems to be made expressly for her. I think no more of the medicine; since it has done me no harm, it has done me good. I shall eat rice out of gratitude for the pleasure it gives me, by preserving your beautiful cheeks, and your health, which is so precious to me. What a constitution you must have, to have borne what you have done! pain of body and of mind, bitter uneasiness, dreadful alarms, violent agitations, every thing, in short, without reckoning the swamps which you will no doubt meet with in your way, in a greater number than you at present imagine: you have resisted all these, my dear child! I am astonished, and believe that the courage God has given you, is almost supernatural. But you have a son who is no longer a *babe in swaddling clothes*, as madame de Coulanges calls him; he is a fine valiant youth, who has distinguished himself above others of his years. M. de Beauvilliers has written wonders of him to the chevalier, and nothing is to be subtracted from his account; this little man is full of good will: we wonder how his silence and timidity gave way to other qualities.

So happy a beginning deserves to be well kept up; but I ought not to address this discourse to you, for nothing I imagine can be added to your sentiments upon the subject. The breaking up of M. de la Rochefoucault's table forms the subject of all the conversation here, at present; it is a great event at Versailles. He told the king he was ruined by it, and that he would

not incur expenses that would lead him into injustice. Not only the table has disappeared, but a certain chamber also, in which the courtiers assembled, because he would neither remind them, nor himself, of the accommodating vehicle which used to be loaded daily with banqueters. He has dismissed forty-two of his servants. This is great news, and an excellent example.

You know I was not long at Brevanes; I have informed you of the melancholy scene which hastened my return. The weather is dull and rainy: never was there so wretched an autumn. In truth we have no fear of gnats; we are afraid only of being drowned. Your sun is very different from ours. I love Paulina, I think her very pretty; I think she pleases you much; I think she adores you. Ah, how can she help adoring so excellent a mother? I say of her, as you said of the princess de Conti: it is a delightful thing to be compelled to this duty. Let her learn Italian; the prior is at Aix, and will be delighted to teach her. I see the count's speech has been very well turned. Present my compliments to your Grignans, and, if you please, to M. d'Aix. How fortunate you are, to think differently from what you formerly did! You saw in this country the price that was given. When you are not on ill terms with M. d'Aix, his conversation is animated and pleasant; and as he is satisfied, I hope you will be at peace.

I have a piece of intelligence to give you, which is scarcely worth mentioning, that Franckendal surrendered on the 18th of this month: it was only necessary to show the cannon; not a soul was killed, or even wounded. The dauphin is come away, and will be at Versailles this day week, the 29th, and your son also. You have received letters from him: oh! for once then, be perfectly satisfied, and thank God for this happy beginning. Adieu, my beloved and amiable child. I

must not omit to tell you, that I desired the mother prioress of the Carmelites to guess what was your employment, after having gained your lawsuit: you will suppose that she could not. "It was this, mother," said I, "since I must conceal nothing from you; she raised a company of light horse." I know not what she thought of this confidence, but she burst into so natural and hearty a laugh, that all our sorrow vanished: I did not forget to tell her of your perfect esteem for the inhabitants of this holy convent. This mother knows well how to lead the conversation.

LETTER * DCCCXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, November 23, 1688.

The chevalier set out yesterday for Versailles; he wishes to be ready to receive the dauphin, and perhaps he will go and meet him with the king. Your son is also on the road, with the satisfaction of having made the most fortunate campaign that could have been wished, even if we had had the forming of it ourselves; for you see that we could not have omitted the contusion, which has brought us so many compliments: for example, madame de Lavardin, madame d'Huxelles, madame de la Fayette, and mademoiselle Rochefoucault, have loaded us with them; but these are so good they must not be confounded with the rest. Madame de Lavardin swears and protests that the marquis has great personal merit, and that nothing could be more fortunate for him than this campaign. The chevalier and I often talk of you; we wish you health and strength to bear all the adverse circumstances you may meet with in your way: here we have a thousand di-

tractions; there, we have none: we always harp upon the same string; we conjure you above all things, to be careful of your health. Coffee is in disgrace here, and consequently I take none: I thought, however, that it did me some good at Brevanes; but I have given it up, notwithstanding. We wish to persuade you, that considering the air you breathe, it must heat your blood, and we would confine you to chicken-broth. I see you overwhelmed with letter-writing; every body writes to you; you are attacked on all sides, and you contend with ten at once. M. de ***† never did half so much as you. Retrench your work therefore, and begin the retrenchment with me; I shall consider this little kindness as a proof of your regard for me. Begin your letter yourself, but at the sixth line give the pen to Paulina: this will be an employment for her mind; you know too well, that nothing is so bad for the chest, as writing eternally and unceasingly as you do. I will set you an example, though the consequence be an abridgement of my pleasures; and will not importune you for useless conversations: talk to me only, in your letters, of yourself and your affairs; for, to speak plainly, I take too much interest in what concerns you, to dispense with knowing it. This is all you shall have at present. You know my mode of life; the days pass, whether we are sad or cheerful; and at last, we shall come to the last: I will love you, my dear countess, till that day inclusively.

† It is said, that M. de *** having perused himself, that he had killed five men with whom he had fought singly, asked the king's pardon; and that, walking a short time afterwards with M. de la Feuillade, he wished to know the names of two persons who were passing. "You will find," said M. de Feuillade, in reply, "that they are two of the men you killed not long ago."

LETTER *DCCCXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, November 26, 1688.

I HAVE been chatting for an hour with Soleri; it is not his fault if I am not happy with regard to your health; but the fever in your blood does not appear when you are beautiful and brilliant in your gallery, and raising your company of horse; for it was through your means: and though, as you say, there is a degree of shame in being so well acquainted with men, you ought to be glad that you have rendered so important a service to your son: you must place it to the account of all the other good things which fortune has thrown in his way in the last three months. I have never witnessed a more desirable entrance into the world, or the army: his courage, firmness, coolness, prudence, and good conduct, have been conspicuous. I saw M. de Pomponne yesterday evening, who was just come from Versailles. He was full of the subject, and delighted at the happy termination of this first campaign; he desired me to congratulate you upon it, and so did madame de Pomponne. Madame de Lislebonn eand her daughters, whom I saw at the marchioness d'Huxelles', talked incessantly, and sent you a thousand affectionate compliments. Every thing is alive to you in this country: what a pity it is, that the fashion of being in two places at once is not yet introduced! you would be very serviceable here to your family. Chance has placed Valcroissant at Salins, from whence he sends an account to M. de Louvois of the horses that pass to remount the troops; he has declared and certified, that those of the marquis de Grignan were the finest of the whole: you may judge with what pleasure he has told this truth. Soleri swears that

he will not come near you, till he has seen and touched your son. The dauphin will be here to-morrow; the marquis on Wednesday: I own I shall be delighted to embrace this little hero; he seems to me to be a different being: would to God you could have the same pleasure.

I recommend to you, my dear child, a little rest, a little tranquillity if it be possible, a little resignation to the will of Providence, and a little philosophy; you trust too much to your courage, and your health suffers by it: this is easily said; but, after all, if we were not supported by invisible means, we should sink. I entreat you above all things, not to write too much: I, for instance, write on Mondays and Wednesdays, to you only; one letter is nothing; but you could never do this. I do not fatigue myself; writing to you is a consolation to me, unmixed with pain; your writing to me is a load, not upon your heart, but your health.

Soleri has informed me of the eagerness which is evinced to receive M. de Grignan at Avignon*; after what I have seen, this does not surprise me: the situation has its advantages and dignities. We expect news from England, with impatience: the prince (of Orange) is landed: the king's army is considerable; nothing has disappointed him yet; if this continue, he will crush this rash adventurer. We fear for the happiness and abilities of M. de Schomberg. Adieu, my beloved: I conclude out of pure malice, and set you an example, for I am not at all fatigued.

* It has been seen, that pope Innocent XI. quarrelled with the king, on the subject of the *régale*. After having attacked his spiritual power, by the famous decisions of the assembly of the clergy, Louis XIV. wished also to strike him in his temporal power; and Avignon, of which he had taken possession, fell into the dependence of M. de Grignan's government.

LETTER *DCCCXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, November 29, 1688.

I have been sorry, my dear child, for this colic without colic; all painful things grieve me: for this sort of colics it is sometimes necessary to take cooling medicines: heating remedies inflame the blood, and occasion great pain. "But, my lord," as Corneille says, "you do not listen to me;" you have no opinion of my skill, and think yourself very clever; I have nothing therefore to say to you, except recommending to your care your own health, if you have any regard for mine.

You have been grieved at my tears for St. Aubin; alas! think not that they have done me harm; they were tears of kindness and consolation, which did not wring my heart, nor injure my constitution: make yourself easy therefore on this subject, as well as on that of your son: you have done as madame de la Fayette said, laughing, you would do; you have discovered something to find fault with in this contusion: but after what the chevalier told you, after the letters of du Plessis, and even of your son, ought you not to consider, as every one else does, this little adventure as a blessing? If the contusion had been in the head, I would forgive you for shutting your heart to joy; but when, to repair the flesh, nothing was required but a little Hungary water,—indeed, you are not worthy the favour God has shown to your boy in this campaign. Ah, make yourself happy now, at least! Madame de la Fayette has just informed me that her son is arrived, that he has said a thousand handsome things of yours, and that he would have come himself to give me tidings of him, if he were not obliged to go to Versailles, where

the dauphin arrived last evening. The good little marquis will be here on Wednesday or Thursday.

I have seen madame de Mornai; she is not at all afflicted. Madame de Nesle* is in excess of grief; and it is perfect martyrdom to her, to be exposed in the apartment of *la Becasse*† (the Woodcock), where every one comes to condole with her, and where she sits motionless, petrified with sorrow. Madame de Maintenon protects her, and wishes her to be liked in the family; she wishes her also to receive visits as formerly. I could tell you many more particulars of these two visits: madame de Coulanges was with me; she took me, out of complaisance, to madame de la Cour-des-Bois, who is a miracle of grief and affliction, saying things which pierce the heart; and with so much truth and nature, that she reduced us both to tears.

I suppose you to be returned to Lambesc; these removals are bad in all respects. I long for you to be settled a little at Aix, and afterwards at Grignan. I am convinced you will live on friendly terms with the archbishop of Aix, since you behave as persons who have seen each other before, which is what I always recommended to you. Adieu, my beloved: this is deplorable weather; the sheep are no longer hardy enough to venture to stay in our meadows at Livri: I am delighted that you still remember this little country, of which I never think without a sigh. It is warm, perhaps, with you, and you are tormented with gnats; alas, my child! this is a proof how distant we are from each other.

* Marie de Coligny, marchioness de Nesle.

† Jeanne de Monchi, marchioness de Mailly, mother-in-law of madame de Nesle.

LETTER * DCCCXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Thursday evening, November 30, 1688.

I WRITE to you this evening, my child, because I am going to-morrow at nine o'clock, to the service for our poor St. Aubin, a respect our holy Carmelites pay him out of pure friendship; I shall see them afterwards, and you will be praised, as you often are: from thence I shall go and dine with madame de la Fayette.

You give me an excellent idea of your eldest daughter; I see her before me; pray embrace her for me; I rejoice that she is happy. For your son, you may love him as much as you please; he deserves it; every one speaks highly of him, and praises him in a way that would give you pleasure: we expect him this week. I have felt all the force of the phrase he made use of to gain esteem, "which must come, or tell the reason why:" it brought tears into my eyes at the moment; but esteem is come already, and will not have to say why it staid away. The reputation of this child is already commenced, and will now only increase. The chevalier is perfectly satisfied, I assure you. I was at first uneasy at the contusion, from the fear of consequences: but when I saw the chevalier was delighted at it; when I heard that he had received the compliments of the whole court, and of madame de Maintenon, upon the occasion, who replied to him with a delightful tone and manner, on his saying it was nothing, "Sir, it is much better than nothing;" when I myself am overwhelmed too with compliments of congratulation; I own all this has vanquished me, and I rejoice with them all, and with M. de Grignan, who so well fixed and arranged this dear boy's first campaign.

You cannot mention the subject of our dinners and suppers more opportunely; I have just supped at the lieutenant's, with madame de Vauvineux, the abbé de la Fayette, the abbé Bigorré and Corbinelli. I have supped twice at madame de Coulanges's with no other company. The *Divinities* are out of joint: the duchess du Lude has been at Verneuil, she is now at Versailles. The dauphin arrived there on Sunday; the king received him in the Forest of Boulogne; the dauphiness, Monsieur, Madame, madame de Bourbon, the princess de Conti, and madame de Guise, were in the carriage. The dauphin alighted, and the king would do the same: the dauphin embraced his father's knees; the king said to him: "It is not thus I wish to receive you; you deserve a different welcome:" and they threw their arms round each other, with the warmest affection: the dauphin then embraced those who were in the carriage, and took his seat there. The chevalier can tell you more. I believe you are informed of the readiness with which the king granted your request respecting Avignon: you must therefore, my beloved child, defer to another opportunity the plan you had formed of hanging yourself.

I have kept at home: the first visitor I had was M. de Pomponne, who loves and admires you; for to admire and to remember you are the same thing. Afterwards I had madame (la presidente) Croiset, the president Rossignol; and we had to begin your praises anew, and the account of your lawsuit. I have seen St. Herem, who sends you a thousand compliments on the contusion, and thanks you for yours to him, on the fall of his son: e will benefit by the overthrow of saucepans at M. de Rochefoucault's, whose good cheer destroyed him. Adieu, most amiable and beloved child: I am going to bed to please you, as you kept from drowning to please me. There is nothing for which I am so much obliged

to you, as for the preservation of your health. I said to you yesterday, I believe, that your warm weather and your gnats showed me too clearly, that we had not the same sun: it froze last week most severely; after that it snowed; so that yesterday we could not stand: now the rain pours in torrents, and we cannot tell whether there is such a thing as the sun in creation.

LETTER *DCCCXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday evening, December 1, 1688.

I WROTE to you last night, because I was to go this morning to the service performed for poor St. Aubin, and from thence to dine with madame de la Fayette. I have seen her son, who told me a great many fine things of yours, and even of M. du Plessis, at which I was very much gratified; for I feared whether he would take the air of that country in good part: but he has assured me, that he did wonders there, often leaving the marquis when he was at table in good company and good spirits. "I see plainly," said he, "that a governor has no business here;" and this in the highest good humour possible. You will receive letters from your son: he is at Metz, and will not be here till Sunday: does this give you uneasiness? Briole and Treville are come to madame de la Fayette's: they desire to be mentioned to you. Briole has repeated to me a letter written by M. de Montausier to the dauphin, after the conquest of Philipsbourg, which pleases me much: "Monseigneur, I do not compliment you upon the taking of Philipsbourg: you had an excellent army, bombs, cannon, and Vauban. Neither do I compliment you upon your valour; it is a virtue hereditary in your

family. But I rejoice, that you are liberal, generous, humane, and appreciate duly the services of those who have behaved well: and it is for these things, I beg you to accept my congratulations." Every one thinks this style worthy of M. de Montausier, and of a governor.

Our Carmelites said a thousand kind things of you; the ball was not ill kept up to-day, but madame de Coulanges did not stir from her seclusion. From the Carmelites, we went to see this little woman, who will be too happy, if she has sense to feel it. My carriage came to take me at five o'clock to madame de la Fayette's: I was told the chevalier was returned, and I flew hither: I merely stopped at M. de Trousse's: he is arrived, but is far from well: he is very thin. Adieu, my best love: I have not changed my sentiments for you since last night.

LETTER *DCCCXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 8, 1688.

I HAVE to inform you to-day, that the king made yesterday seventy-four knights of the order of the Holy Ghost, of which I send you the list. As he has done M. de Grignan the honour to include him, and as you will receive a hundred thousand congratulations upon the occasion, wiser heads than mine advise you, neither to say nor write any thing that may give offence to any of your companions in this honour. The best way, perhaps, would be to write to M. de Louvois, and to say that the honour he had done you of enquiring after you by your courier, gives you the privilege of thanking him; and that wishing to believe, on the subject of the favour the king has just granted to M. de Grignan, that he has contributed towards it by his approbation

at least, you return him thanks also for this. You will give this a better turn than I can do; and it will do no injury to the letter M. de Grignan should write. The particulars of what passed are these: The king said to M. le Grand *: "The count de Soissons † and you must agree among yourselves with respect to rank." You must know, that M. le Grand's son is in the promotion, which is contrary to the general rules. You must know also, that the king said to the dukes, that he had read their memorial, and that he found that the house of Lorraine had taken precedence of them on several occasions; and so it is decided ‡. M le Grand then spoke to the count de Soissons: they proposed to draw lots, "provided," said the count, "that if you win, I pass between you and your son §." M. le Grand would not consent to this, and so the count de Soissons is not a chevalier. The king asked M. de la Trémouille how old he was: he replied, that he was thirty-three: the king excused him two years. This favour, it is said, which has given some offence to the principality, has not been estimated as it ought to have been. However, he is the first duke, according to the precedence of his dukedom ||. The king spoke to M. de Soubise, and told him, he was willing to confer the order on him, but that, as he was not a duke, he must rank after the dukes: M. de Soubise thanked him for this honour, and only request-

* Louis de Lorraine, count d'Armagnac, first equerry of France.

† Louis Thomas de Savoy, count de Soissons.

‡ It is related, that the duke of Luxembourg said upon this subject: "There is one thing I cannot comprehend."—"And what is that?" said the king.—"How a Bourbon can look upon a Guise."

§ Henry de Lorraine, count de Brionne.

|| Messieurs de la Tremouille have the highest rank at court, as being the eldest dukes, and Messieurs d'Usez the highest rank in the parliament, as being the eldest peers.

ed, that the offer and the refusal should be mentioned in the register of the order, for family reasons, which was granted. The king said aloud: "Some surprise will be excited at the appointment of M. d'Hocquincourt*, and he will himself be as much surprised as any one, for he has never spoken to me on the subject; but I ought not to forget, that when his father quitted my service, his son rushed into Péronne, and defended the town against his father†." There is great virtue in this remembrance. After the list of seventy-three was filled up, the king recollected the chevalier de Sourdis‡, whom he had forgotten; he asked for the list again, and said he was going to do a thing contrary to the rules of the order, because there would be a hundred and one knights; but that he thought they would agree with him, that M. de Sourdis ought not to be omitted, and that he highly

* Georges de Monchi, marquis d'Hocquincourt, lieutenant-general of the king's army, son of Charles de Monchi, marshal d'Hocquincourt.

† This fact happened in the year 1658. The confederacy of the Fronde was still felt and resented. Marshal d'Hocquincourt, the same who, in the year 1649, wrote to the beautiful Montbazon this famous note, "Péronne belongs to the fairest of the fair," seduced a second time by the duchess de Chantillon, was preparing to surrender the town of Péronne to the Spaniards, and the great Condé. The court having prevented this in time, he went over to the enemy; and his son found himself commissioned to defend the place against the army in which his father was serving. The court, however, lost in him only a general of very moderate talents, who, in 1651, suffered himself with seven thousand men to be completely beaten at Blenau, by the great Condé, at the head of a detachment of less than twelve hundred men. He was killed in the same year, 1658, in a skirmish near Dunkirk, on the eve of the battle of the Downs.

The marshal d'Hocquincourt is well known, by his singular conversation with the Jesuit Canaye. Every one must have read this striking fragment in St. Evremond, which, however, is not by this author, but almost entirely by Charleval.

‡ Francis d'Escoubleau, count de Sourdis, lieutenant-general of the king's army, governor of the town of Orleans.

deserved the favour. This is another kind recollection. They were all therefore nominated yesterday, at Versailles: the ceremony of the installation will take place on the first day of the new year; this is a short time; many are excused from being present, and you perhaps will be of the number. The chevalier is going to Versailles, to return thanks to the king.

We supped yesterday at M. de Lamoignon's; the duchess de Villeroi came as a neighbour: she sends you her compliments, and accepts yours. M. de Beauvais* came also: the king told him, he was sorry not to be able to confer on him the order of knighthood, but assured him, that he should have the first vacancy. There are so many ready to vacate, that he may be almost considered as having obtained it.

M. and madame de Pelletier were among the first to congratulate you, as well as madame de Vauvineux, M. and madame de Luynes, and, in short, all France. I am going out this evening, that I may see only the list (of visits). Nothing can compare with the torrent of compliments which every where overwhelms us. But while many are satisfied, there are many who are not so. M. de Rohan, M. de Brisac, M. de Canaples, messieurs d'Ambres, de Tallard, de Cauvisson du Roure, de Peyre, M. de Mailli, an old lord related to the higher powers; messieurs de Livri, de Cavoie, the provost marshal (M. de Sourches), and others whom I have forgotten: this is always the case. Adieu, my beloved child; I embrace you and congratulate you also, and M. de Grignan, and the coadjutor. I shall write to M. d'Arles on Monday, after I have seen the marquis.

* Toussaint de Forbin, bishop and count de Beauvais, afterwards cardinal, was made commander of the king's orders, in a private promotion, on the 29th of May, 1689.

will add no other subject to this letter: except one observation, that God sends you help by this means, and by means of Avignon, which ought to take away your desire of hanging yourself.

The abbé Têtu sends you all sorts of compliments. Madame de Coulanges intends to write to M. de Grignan: she was yesterday too agreeable with father Gaillard; she wanted no one but M. de Grignan, who was her blue ribbon; she wished every one was like him; every thing else was indifferent to her, now the king had done you justice. The chevalier laughed heartily, understanding, by this approbation, her disapprobation of several others†.

LETTER * DCCCXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, December 6, 1688.

Your last letter has an air of gaiety and expansion of heart, which convinces me that Franckendal is taken, and that he is safe, I mean the marquis. Enjoy this pleasure, my beloved child: your son sleeps to-night at Claie; you see he will pass through Livri, and to-morrow he will sup with us. The chevalier, who is indeed an excellent creature in all respects, is returned from Versailles: he has thanked the king, and it has all passed off well. You will assume the blue ribbon on the second of January in the midst of Provence, over which you have the command, and where there are only you and M. d'Arles your uncle. This distinction and remembrance of his majesty, when you the least ex-

† Madame de Maintenon had caused her brother M. d'Aubigné, and her friends messieurs de Montcherreuil and de Villarceau, to be included in this promotion.

pected it, are highly gratifying: even the compliments you receive on all sides, are not like those which are paid to others: it is to little purpose to say, "Ah this! ah that!" for my part, I say on this subject, as on many others, "What is good, is good;" you will lose nothing; and when we think of those who are in despair, we consider ourselves very fortunate to be in the recollection of a master who does not forget the services that are rendered him both by ourselves and our children. I own to you I feel this joy thoroughly, without appearing to do so. The chevalier has a great desire to send word of it this evening to our marquis at Claie, who will not be insensible to it. He wishes also to send you your blue ribbon with two Saint Esprits, because the time draws on; he believes you have your grandfather's * cross at Grignan; if you have not, you would be at a loss for one. I own that if the chevalier had not forestalled me, I should have made you this pretty little present; but I give place to him in every thing. The favour is complete by the permission of not attending the installation. I am charged with a hundred compliments; madame de Lesdiguières, madame de Mouci, madame de Lavardin, M. de Harlai, and I know not how many others I could name; for they are in long lists, as when you gained your lawsuit. Think not, my dear child, that you have been out of luck for the last three months: I begin with your gaining your cause; then the preservation of your son; his early reputation; his contusion; the beauty of his company, to which you contributed; and I conclude with the business of Avignon and the blue ribbon: think on all of this, and be thankful to God. It is true, you have

* Louis Castellane Adhémar de Monteil, received knight of the king's orders in 1584, lieutenant-general of the government of Provence, was M. de Grignan's great-grandfather.

suffered severely: to leave your child and the means of hearing of him, to remove from him at a time of peril, was a death-stroke, I grant you; and then to be deprived of the pleasure of experiencing all the subsequent joys in the heart of the little family you have here; we have shared this sorrow too with you, as well as that of not being able to see the little urchin, whom we shall see to-morrow: all this is painful; but it is the will of God, my dear child, that good and evil should be blended together.

M. de Grignan has reason to triumph and exult over you in this first campaign of his son: the idea of the contrary makes me tremble. What an era! Philipsburg and the dauphin. A wound at sixteen years of age, and an established reputation. M. de Beauvilliers, whose son he was. This company, the fruit of your labours, which is decidedly the finest in the army. You were right, my dear count, and my daughter was wrong: do not lose this opportunity of triumphing, you well know why.

Let us talk a little, my beloved, of your health; mine is perfect: no extravagance, no lure, no *hi's*, no *ha's*, a machine well regulated in all respects. Guard your chest, do not write too much; your chicken broths have been substituted for coffee to cool you: manage yourself, govern yourself, if you love your son, your family, your husband, your mother, your brothers; for, in a word, you are the life and soul of all these.

The spot where St. Aubin rests is under the choir, on the right as you enter, that you may not take Brancas* with him. It is very good of you to wear mourning for St. Aubin: alas! a poor recluse, though so pious, makes no great noise in the world. M. de Tréville was

* Charles, marquis de Brancas, who died January 8, 1681, was buried at the Carmelites.

enthusiastic the other day at madame de la Fayette's in praise of your merit and your beauty; for no face pleases him like yours: madame de la Fayette supported him, madame de Lavardin struck the full chord, and the rest joined; in short, it was a natural conversation with which vanity could not but be flattered; these are not people to throw praises to dogs. Adieu, my lovely: this is enough for to-day; I will resume the conversation the day after to-morrow. Do not repent your being praiseworthy and adored by all who behold you: if your law-suit had gained you only this, it would have been a great deal. But you seemed to me to be sufficiently polite when I was at Aix; you are now more than amiable: it is so unworthy a thing to be vain, that you have kept from falling into that error. One word, and no more; we have remarked, as well as you, that the little marquis, whom we shall embrace to-morrow, has been constantly taken up with his company, and never with himself: this may be called the point of perfection.

LETTER * DCCCXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, December 8, 1688.

This little urchin, after having sent us word that he should not arrive till yesterday (Tuesday), like a giddy fellow, came the day before yesterday, at seven o'clock in the evening, before I returned from the city. My uncle received him, and was delighted to see him; and when I returned, I found him in high spirits, and looking very well; he embraced me five or six times with a very good grace; he would kiss my hand, and I would kiss his cheeks, so that we had quite a battle; at last I

got possession of his head, and kissed it where and how I pleased; I wanted to see his contusion, but as it was upon the left thigh, no offence to you, I thought it not decorous to make him undress. We chatted all the evening with this little compeer; he adores your picture, and wishes much to see his dear mamma: but the quality of warrior is so severe, that we dared not propose any thing. I wish you could have heard with what indifference he related the affair of the contusion, and the little regard he paid to it, and the little concern it gave him, when every one in the trenches was uneasy at it. In a word, my dear child, if he had attended to your lessons, and had kept himself upright, he would have been killed: but, according to his good custom, being seated on the bank, he was leaning on the count de Guiche, with whom he was chatting. You could not have supposed, my child, that it could have been so advantageous to be a little awkward in posture. We do nothing but talk; we are delighted to see him, and we sigh that you have not the same pleasure. M. and madame de Coulanges came to see him yesterday morning: he has returned their visit, and has called on M. de Lamoignon; he asks questions, and makes replies, happily; in short, he is a different being. I gave him a hint of the way in which he was to speak of the *cordons bleus;* as nothing else is talked of, it is well to know what to say, to avoid making unfortunate blunders, by saying what comes naturally to the tip of the tongue: he understood all this perfectly. I told him that M. de Lamoignon, who was accustomed to the cl[illegible]ng of little Broglio*, was not easily reconciled

* The eldest son of Victor Maurice, count de Broglio, marshal of France, killed at the siege of Charleroi in 1693. He was the nephew of M. de Lamoignon.

to a silent person, and he talked away admirably: indeed he is a very pretty youth. We eat together; do not be alarmed: the chevalier takes the marquis, and I M. du Plessis; this is a sort of play between us. Versailles will separate us, but I shall still detain M. du Plessis. I highly approve the good omen of having been preserved by his sword. If you had been here, my dear child, we might very well have gone to Livri: I am, in reality, as much mistress of it as formerly. I thank you for remembering it. I die with laughing at your fool of a woman, who will not play at cards till the king of England has won a battle: she ought to be accoutred till then like an amazon, instead of being decked out in violet and white, as when I saw her. Paulina, then, is not perfect; so much the better, you will find amusement in moulding her afresh: guide her gently: the desire of pleasing you, will have a better effect than scolding. All my friends continue to love, esteem, and praise, you: this redoubles my affection for them. My pockets are full of compliments for you. The abbé de Guénégaud began this morning to stammer out such a high-flown one, that I said to him, "Pray make haste, sir, if you wish to finish your compliment before the ceremony takes place." In short, my dear child, nothing is talked of but you and the Grignans. I thought with you, that the month of November was sufficiently long and full of great events; but I confess I found the month of October much longer, and more tedious; I could not at all reconcile myself to the idea of not seeing you every instant: this was a painful time; your son has diverted the course of my thoughts during the last month. I shall no longer have to say, "He will return:" you do not wish it: you wish me to say, "He is here." Be satisfied then, for here he comes indeed.

FROM THE MARQUIS DE GRIGNAN.

"If it is not he, it is his brother, or some one belonging to him." Here I am, madam, really and truly arrived; and think too, that I have been, of my own head, to call upon M. de Lamoignon, madame de Coulanges, and madame de Bagnols. Is not this the action of a man who has been at three sieges? I have chatted with M. de Lamoignon by his chimney-corner, drank coffee with madame de Bagnols, and slept at the baths: another action of a great man. You cannot conceive my joy at having so fine a company, an obligation I owe to you. I shall go to see it, when it passes through Chalons. Behold then already a good company, a good lieutenant, a good quarter-master, and though the captain is young, I will answer for him. Adieu, madam; permit me to kiss your hand most respectfully.

LETTER * DCCCXXI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, December 9, 1688.

You are returned then from your estates. You have quitted the old castles of Coligny and Cressia, for your beautiful mansions of Bussy and Chaseu. I have to thank you for the readiness with which you entered into my occupation during the siege of Philipsburg; I have since been obliged to give all my attention to Manheim and Franckendal. I have even been trembling at the bursting of a bomb, which flattened the hilt of the marquis's sword, as it hung upon his thigh. This blow must have fallen with the utmost nicety, for there was a very short distance between the contusion

and death. You will suppose, therefore, my dear cousin, that it was a difficult matter to extricate me from all these embarrassments. I am now, however, at rest. The little de Grignan is returned; he has had, like you, the pleasure of seeing proofs of the king's remembrance in the number of knights he is to create on the first day of the new year. M. de Grignan is to be one, though absent: he was at his post in Provence with my daughter, just where he ought to be. He has even permission to stay away, which, in the present delicate state of his health, is much trouble and expense saved. In short, a ray of happiness has beamed upon us ever since the gaining of this law-suit, which I believe has given you great pleasure, for you love my daughter, and you know she loves you. For my part, my dear cousin, these occasions renew my grief on your account. I have not so much courage as you; I should like to see your name where it ought to be. Alas! I am wrong, for you ought to have been a *cordon bleu* in the former promotion. In truth, my dear cousin, it is better to throw ourselves into the arms of Christianity or philosophy, than to dwell longer on this disagreeable subject. Meanwhile, the conversation every where is so full of the approaching ceremony, that we almost forget the affairs of England, which are of great consequence. Do you not wonder at M. de Schomberg's fate, to attach himself to the prince of Orange, the greatest enemy of the king from whom he has received so many favours, and whom he had served with so much renown?

LETTER DCCCXXII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 10, 1688.

I CANNOT answer your letters to-day, as they came so late, and I answer two on a Monday. The marquis is a little rustic, but not enough so to render him ridiculous; he will not have so fine a figure as his father, nor is it to be expected; in other respects he does very well, answering pertinently to every thing that is asked him, like a man of good sense, who has made observations, and sought information, during his campaign: his conversation is tinctured with a modesty and rectitude that charm us. M. du Plessis is very worthy of the esteem you bear him. We take our meals together very socially, amusing ourselves with the unjust proceedings we sometimes adopt against one another; make yourself easy upon this score, and think no more about it; let it be my part to blush at thinking that a wren is a heavy burthen to me: I own I am grieved at it, but we must submit to the great justice of paying our debts; no one understands this better than yourself; you have also kindness enough for me, to believe that I am not naturally avaricious, and that I have no intention to hoard. When you are here, good madam, you tutor your son so well, that I am compelled to admire you; but, in your absence, I undertake to teach him the common rules of conversation, which it is important to know; there are some things of which we ought not to be ignorant. It would be ridiculous to appear astonished at certain events which are the topics of the day; I am sufficiently acquainted with these trifles. I also strongly recommend to him attention to what

others say, and the presence of mind by which we quickly comprehend and answer; this is a principal object in our intercourse with the world. I repeat to him instances of miracles of this kind, which Dangeau related to us the other day; he admires them, and I lay great stress upon the charms, and even utility, of this sort of alertness of mind. In short, I obtain the chevalier's approbation: we converse together on books, and the misfortune of being troubled with listlessness and want of employment: we call this the laziness of the mind, which deprives us of a taste for good books, and even romances; as this is an interesting subject, we frequently enter upon it. Little Auvergne * is very fond of reading; he was never happy when with the army, unless he had a book in his hand. God knows whether M. du Plessis and we can turn this fine and noble passion to account; we are willing to believe the marquis susceptible of the best impressions; we suffer no opportunity to pass unimproved, that can tend to inspire him with so desirable a taste. The chevalier is of more use to this dear boy, than can easily be imagined; he is continually striking the full chords of honour and reputation, and takes an interest in his affairs, for which you cannot sufficiently thank him: he enters into every thing, attends to every thing, and wishes the marquis to regulate his own accounts, and incur no unnecessary expenses; by this means, he endeavours to give him a habit of regularity and economy, and to make him lay aside the air of grandeur, of "what does it signify," of ignorance, and indifference, which is the direct path to every kind of injustice, and, at length, to the workhouse: can there be any obligation equal to

* Francis-Egon de la Tour, prince of Auvergne, who quitted the French army in 1702, in which he served in Germany, to enter into the service of the emperor.

that of training up your son in these principles? For my part, I am charmed with it, and think this sort of education far more noble than any other. The chevalier is a little afflicted with the gout: he will go to-morrow, if he can, to Versailles, and will inform you of the situation of his affairs. You already know that you are a knight of the order, which is a very desirable thing in the centre of your province, and in actual service, and will admirably become M. de Grignan's fine figure: there will, however, be no one to dispute it with him in Provence, for he will not be envied by his uncle*, as this title does not go out of the family.

La Fayette is just going from hence: he has been holding forth a full hour about one of the little marquis's friends; he has related so many ridiculous things of him, that the chevalier thinks himself obliged to mention them to his father, who is his friend; he thanked La Fayette for his intelligence, for in fact, there is nothing of so much consequence as being in good company, and it often happens, that, without being ridiculous ourselves, we are rendered so by those we associate with: make yourself easy upon this subject, the chevalier will set matters right. I shall be very much mortified, if he cannot present his nephew on Sunday; this gout is a great drawback upon our happiness. With respect to Paulina, can you, my dear child, expect her to be perfect? She is not mild in her own apartment; many persons who are very much beloved and respected have had the same fault: I think you may easily correct it; but take particular care not to scold and humiliate her. All my friends lend me with a thousand compliments and a thousand regards to you. Madame de Lavardin called upon me

* The archbishop of Arles was commander of the royal orders of knighthood.

yesterday, to tell me she esteemed you too highly to send you *compliments;* but that she embraced you with all her heart, and the great count de Grignan: these were her words. You have great reason to love her.

What I am going to relate is a fact. Madame de Brinon, the very soul of St. Cyr, and the intimate friend of madame de Maintenon, is no longer at St. Cyr*; she quitted that place four days ago; madame Hanover, who loves her, brought her back to the hotel de Guise, where she still remains. There does not seem to be any misunderstanding between her and madame de Maintenon, for she sends every day to enquire after her health; this increases our curiosity to know the subject of her disgrace. Every one is whispering about it without knowing more: if this affair should be cleared up, I will inform you of the circumstances.

* Madame de Brinon, at the time of the first establishment of St. Cyr, was placed at the head of that house. She had great learning and talents, but an equal portion of pride and ambition. The superior only of the house, she assumed the airs of an abbess. She displayed the most offensive ostentation; she held a court; she opposed madame de Maintenon, whose dependent she was. These things offended the king, as well as her benefactress. A lettre de cachet obliged her to leave St. Cyr in twenty-four hours.

The duchess of Hanover, who received her, and who was the daughter of the celebrated princess palatine, was soon disgusted with madame de Brinon, who retired to the abbey of Maubuisson, and died there, regretting the world, regretting St. Cyr, and regretting life.

LETTER DCCCXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, December 13, 1688.

I COULD never have thought I should be pleased without seeing M. de Grignan on new-year's day; but it is certain that the chevalier and I are very easy about the king's permission to stay away. You will do like other absent persons, and take your blue ribbon when you are bid; but I suppose you will be obliged to come here to complete the ceremony of knighthood in the course of the next year, to take the collar and the oath, and thereby go through the whole instalment without reproach. Thus we reason, but it is only in perspective. Your son was yesterday at Versailles with M. du Plessis: it is a pity the chevalier could not take him there; he is, however, pretty well, but cannot leave his chair; I nursed him yesterday. Neither Turi, Amelot, du Bellai, nor any other man, could make me leave my post; but on a sudden entered the duchess d'Elbeuf *, and her cousin madame Le Coigneux; I trembled lest the chevalier should be angry, but he was not at all so: she led the conversation, and kept it up so well for half an hour, that he was charmed with her.

To return to the little marquis; think not that we have been insensible to the grief of this child's return, without finding you where he left you; I have not told you what I felt, and what I knew you suffered; I did not dwell upon this, and I was right. If you had seen the violent contortion of his sword, and the weight of

* Frances de Montault, daughter of Philip de Montault, duke of Navailles, peer and marshal of France.

the piece of shell that bent it upon his hip, you would certainly think he was very fortunate, and that Providence had visibly interposed in his preservation; you would adore the Omnipotent hand that had measured the blow, and guided it so fortunately for you and for us all; for we have indeed a very great affection for this little captain. Soleri had informed us how busy you had been about his company; but what you write to us is much more entertaining; we have read it over and over again: this diversion has done you good. Be not uneasy respecting your child's health; he has neither been bled nor received medicine; nothing of this was necessary. He has a good appetite, sleeps soundly, has a regular pulse, and is very strong, even in fatigue; this is what a physician might destroy, if we were to put him into such hands. Sanzei is returned, after being often in the trenches; he did not confine himself to the rules of a musqueteer; he ate with the dauphin, and why not? two others had done so. M. de Beauvilliers obtained him this pleasure at last, that it might lead to no farther consequence.

Madame de Bagnols, who is quite pale and thin, presents us with a gentle languor sometimes accompanied with tears; she often gives us an account of the cruel and fatal disorder of her friend, who, she maintains, was killed by a physician. Madame de Coulanges is tolerably negligent, and very calm. The abbé Têtu is troubled with the vapours, which he communicates to all his friends; his want of sleep is almost incredible. I go to the mass of the community; the ladies of eleven o'clock have the penance to go through of hearing the prior, who always keeps them an hour; and sometimes I go to the duchess du Lude's, who sends you a hundred thousand remembrances: write some answer that I can show her. Madame de Saint Germain, ma-

dame de Villars, madame d'Elbeuf, and a thousand others whom I forget, do the same. I refused supping with the duchess de Villeroi on Wednesday, as I wished to bid adieu to Soleri; and on Thursday I would not go to the duchess du Lude's, because it rained violently: on Friday I went with her to eat new-laid eggs at madame de Coulanges's. You see I inform you of all my actions; I like that you should be interested even in these trifles; this, in a manner, brings us together. I often see the chevalier; his apartment * is very attracting; I cannot say so much of La Meri, though we agree very well together. You are very merry with the coadjutor; he has a gaiety that makes us feel quite at our ease with him, and he appears to be attached to you, as well as M. de Carcassonne. Have they not, indeed, reason to love you passionately? what have you not done for them, for their name, for their family! entirely yielded, devoted, ruined, separated yourself from your whole family, except your mother; and why? because you have given me your whole heart. I wear your livery, and you love me.

Good God! my dear child, what fools your women are, both living and dead! your top-knots † shock me! What a profanation! it smells of paganism; foh! It would make me shudder at the thoughts of dying in Provence; I would, at least, be assured that the milliner and undertaker were not sent for at the same time. Fie, fie, indeed! but no more of this ‡.

* Mademoiselle Grignan's apartment.

† It was the custom in Provence to bury the dead with their faces uncovered; and the women who wore ribbons as a head-dress, retained them in their coffins.

‡ This passage might deserve the name of presentiment. All she feared came to pass. She died in Provence, and the very head-dress which was so repugnant to her mind, adorned her in her coffin.

The affairs of England cannot be worse, and your lady seems as if she would not keep the whip-hand long. I will send you the good Bigorré's letter. Corbinelli is elated with your civilities; but do not kill yourself with answering him, for it would be too arduous a task. Reflect that I have only you, and this is the burthen of my song, *pago lei, pago il mondo.* Madame de Chaulnes desires to be kindly remembered to you, but sends no compliments, for reasons that are too obvious. M. de Chaulnes writes very pleasantly; he narrowly escaped being drowned in going from Brest to Belleisle. He is at present at Rennes; I still owe him a thousand obligations. I saw Mademoiselle with the duchess de Lesdiguières: the princess says she will write to you: the duchess says all sorts of kind things of you, and particularly of M. de Grignan.

I know nothing yet respecting madame de Brinon, except that the king has given her a pension of 2,000 crowns a year; it is said she will be one of the sisters of the convent of St. Antony. She preached very well, you know. The good Gobelin * is to succeed her, who, to fill both places, will be obliged to preach all day long. Surely, this folly, which you tell us of your preacher, could never be believed, though we have long taken it into our heads to say, "Adam, the good papa: Eve, the cruel mamma." We cannot surpass you here.

You should not be ashamed of retrenching your table, since the king, after the example of his great huntsman†, has retrenched his at Marli; there is now only the ladies' table. Madame de Louville the elder told me she no longer gave suppers: in short, we have many examples before us.

* Confessor of St. Cyr. † M. de la Rochefoucault.

The king of England is returned to London, abandoned by those whom he thought the most faithfully attached to him: he was seized with a violent bleeding at the nose: if he had gone where he had intended, he would have been delivered up to the prince of Orange. He has been compelled to promise to call a free parliament next month, which it is said will be his certain ruin. His kinsman, the prince of Denmark, and his other daughter *, who is a second Tullia, and whom I shall call the *demoiselle* of Denmark, are gone to join that pest, the prince of Orange. It is said that the little prince † is not at Portsmouth, where he was supposed to be besieged; his flight will one day make an excellent romance. It is not doubted but the king his father will fly also. Thus the prince of Orange is apparently sovereign and protector, and will soon be worse, unless a miracle takes place. These were the reports at three o'clock; perhaps the abbé Bigorré will know more at night.

LETTER DCCCXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, December 15, 1688.

HERE have I been rivetted for these two hours, to my fireside, with a little table before me, working hard, to finish my letters of business for Britany; a letter to my son, which I send to M. de Chaulnes for the sake of the news it contains, as he is at Rennes; and now I am going to unbend my mind and refresh my head by writing to my

* Anne Stuart, wife of prince George of Denmark, and queen of England, after the death of William III her brother-in-law.

† James Francis Edward, prince of Wales, born 20th June, in the same year.

dear child. It is quite a relief to me to write to you, and the more so, as our little hero, who has no poetic vein, is returning from Versailles, and will take up the pen when I desire him, to relate his conduct and the intentions of the court, in the same manner as fame has trumpeted forth those of Philipsburg and Manheim.

I very much approve the answer you would have had the dauphin make to M. de Montausier's letter: this would have been complete, and worthy of a hero. A medal has been struck with an inscription which is put into the mouth of our enemies: it represents a young eagle armed with a thunderbolt, and the legend is this line of Horace:

Cœlo tonantem credidimus Jovem.

With respect to your wearing mourning for poor St. Aubin, I have not a word to say against it, except that it was unnecessary at such a distance, where the poor fellow was so little known. You are very good, and M. de Grignan very polite: but you must not fail to leave it off on new-year's day, at least; the princess de Conti has left off her mourning for madame de Sanzei; and M. de la Trousse will do the same. I find communion is frequent in Provence; to my shame be it spoken, I neglected the immaculate conception of the Mother, to reserve myself wholly for the nativity of the Son; for this we cannot be too well prepared. But here comes the marquis, from his high station; I was beginning to sing:

Le heros que j'attends, ne reviendra-t-il pas? *

Here, then, he is, and I resign my pen to him.

* Will the hero I expect, never return?

FROM THE MARQUIS DE GRIGNAN.

I AM just returned from Versailles, madam, where I went on Sunday; I immediately waited on marshal de Lorges, and desired him to present me to the king, which he promised to do, and appointed to meet me at the door of madame de Maintenon's apartment, to salute him upon his return. I accordingly saluted him: he stopped, bowed his head to me, and smiled. The next day I saluted the dauphin, the dauphiness, Monsieur, Madame, and the other princes of the blood, in their respective apartments, and I every where met with a gracious reception. I dined with madame d'Armagnac, who paid me a thousand attentions, and loaded me with a thousand remembrances to you. From thence I went to M. de Montausier's, where I staid till the play began. The performance was Andromache, which was quite new to me; judge, madam, of the pleasure I received from it. At night I went to the supper, and the couchees; and the next day, which was yesterday, to the levees: I passed the rest of the morning at the public offices, and at M. Charpentier's; I dined with M. de Montausier; and after dinner I waited upon madame d'Armagnac, from thence went to Sertorius; and spent the remainder of the day in the same manner as the preceding one. I was this morning at the levees: after which, M. de la Trousse took me to M. de Louvois, who told me to think of my company. I told him it was complete, and M. de la Trousse added, that it was a very fine one. This, madam, is a true account of what passed at Versailles. Permit me, in looking at your picture, to lament, that I cannot throw myself at the feet of the original, kiss both her hands, and aspire to one of her cheeks.

LETTER DCCCXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 17, 1688.

I BEGAN this letter early in the morning, and shall finish it to-night, if the post-boy thinks proper to come at a reasonable hour: in a word, I shall imitate the chevalier. We have a great desire to see your answer respecting the blue ribbon, which must certainly have been an agreeable surprise to you. We find you are the only provincial governors who are distinguished upon this occasion; for the brother of the lady of honour who is a menin, and an ambassador, had higher pretensions than you*. The rest of the commanders are warriors; all others are quite forgotten. But, alas, my dear love, how distant we are from each other! a whole fortnight have we been expecting this answer. M. de Lamoignon is going to spend the holidays at Baville; he took me last night to sup with him at the chevalier's. M. Amelot, who is returned from Portugal, and is going into Switzerland, without having had time scarcely to breathe, supped there also; Coulanges was there; your health was drank all round, and your absence regretted; you would not be forgotten here, even if I were not present. The duchess du Lude is somewhat indisposed; she is troubled with a vomiting; she keeps her room, and talks of you continually. Madame de Coulanges, and the *divinities*, are employed in diverting the abbé de Tetu's vapours, which are very strong, and deprive him of sleep: M. du Bois, who is a very skilful physi-

* The count de Grignan, lieutenant-general in the government of Provence and the king's army, did not serve after the year 1670, except upon the frontiers, where he commanded in the absence of M. de Verdôme.

cian, prescribes also for the abbé; he returns you a thousand thanks for your obliging remembrance of him. I yesterday returned a thousand visits I had received in our neighbourhood, on the score of your knighthood; among others, to M. de Richebourg, who adores you, and madame de Maisons, who is quite a Grignan. The marquis had been with her, and had entertained her highly; he is very polite, and I am grieved you cannot see him.

The chevalier is embarrassed at his great reputation; he is held up as a model, both with respect to life and manners; his friends are proud of him. He dragged himself yesterday to M. de Paris's, and told him he had made an effort to come to him, in order to undeceive the world concerning the false reports about M. de Beauvilliers: he covered his face with his hand, and said seriously what he thought; but his hand could not conceal his tears. He intends performing the same office on Sunday for M. de Dangeau *. He will inform you to-night of all you have to do. I always recur to the maxim, *whatever is good, is good;* according to this balance, no one loses or gains: all people are made acquainted with themselves, which embarrasses not a few. Songs and lampoons fly about in abundance, but I pay no attention to them; however, I must tell you what the countess † said aloud at Mademoiselle's the other day,

Le Roi, dont la bonté le met à mille épreuves,
Pour soulager les chevaliers nouveaux,
En a dispensé vingt de porter des manteaux,
Et traite de faire leurs preuves‡.

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* These were the formalities necessary to the admission of knights of the order. It is evident that the way in which she speaks of M. de Beauvilliers is a mere jest.

† The countess de Feisque.

‡ The king, whose goodness exposes him to a thousand trials, in order

This is all very well. Madame de Vaubecourt, like you, has gained her cause with triumph. M. de Broglio has superseded La Trousse in the command of Languedoc; but it is expected that his predecessor will be better provided for: the expenses he incurred in this province, will oblige his successor to button-up pretty closely. I tell you nothing, my dear child, but trifles; I leave subjects of importance to the chevalier, content at being as much interested as himself, in every thing that concerns you, to sit by the chimney-corner, and chat with him about you, to wish that your Avignon business may turn out well, and that your journey may be useful. There was such a noise the day before yesterday, as I was concluding my letter, that I could not tell you half of what I had to say to you; and it is lucky that I love you three days successively, to be able to resume the thread of my discourse in the same key.

The duke de Coislin is come again, to desire the chevalier to be a witness for him, and the bishop of Orleans * also: in short, his approbation must be obtained at all events. It will not be surprising next month, to see two knights of the blue ribbon fighting: there is a fine number of them. This is enough, my dear child, till night. You are not mistaken with respect to Sappho's† poetry; your taste is good, and will always be so; and mine too is good, to love and esteem you as I do.

I am just returned from the city. I have been to thank madame de Meckelbourg for her civilities, and madame d'Elbeuf for her visit: you drew these obliga-

to relieve the new knights, has excused twenty from wearing their cloaks, and thirty from proving their nobility.

* Peter de Cambout de Coislin, bishop of Orleans, then first almoner to the king, afterwards cardinal and great almoner of France.

† Mademoiselle de Scudery.

tions upon me. I have heard nothing new. The affairs of England do not change their aspect daily. Your letters are not yet arrived. As you find my affection for you does not vary between Wednesday and Friday; in like manner, neither does it change between morning and night: so, my dear child, I am wholly yours, and I conjure you to love me always as you do now.

Ah! here comes your letter of the 19th. I acknowledge I expected it with impatience: I longed to know, if your joy and sentiments kept pace with ours; thank God, I find they do. Indeed, you ought to be satisfied; all the compliments that are paid you, are calculated to please and flatter you. Madame de Lavardin says, that she loves you too well, to say any thing in form. In fact, every one, whether speaking or silent, is on your side. You are mistaken, if you think the promotion is no longer thought of; every thing is in as much agitation as ever, and the affairs of England afford only a slight diversion; the nearer the ceremony approaches, the more active are the preparations. M. de Charost was on the road, and was ordered twenty leagues farther off. None who command in the provinces will return: judge then if the most distant, and the only one in Provence, will do so; make yourself easy, the favour is complete. Whatever trouble my son-in-law may occasion me, by the compliments I receive on his account, I should be very sorry to be in Britany; I have had too much pleasure from all that I have heard and seen with respect to this business. I accept your compliments, my dear countess; you cannot be more interested than I am.

LETTER DCCCXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, December 20, 1688.

Is it possible, my dearest child, that I write well? My pen flies rapidly; but since you are contented, I ask no more. You will, with a little patience, obtain all you desire. M. de Grignan will not come, and the king will send you the blue ribbon, with the cross at the end. If the absentees are created knights by proxy, as it is said they will, the archbishop (of Arles) will be requested to personate his dear nephew: if not, it will take place upon your first journey, and you will have the blue ribbon in the mean time. In short, you will do as the rest do, and you will receive instructions.

How do you and M. d'Aix agree? He has bestowed so many praises upon me, by your account, that I dare not tell you, I wish he may not be displeased with you all. But you know, and so does the coadjutor, how much the bickerings of the provinces are in general detested here: we call them *picking of lobsters*. As to your son, the chevalier endeavours to make him a man with a head, pointing out to him the great inconvenience of being without one. It will not be our fault, if he does not learn in your absence all he was ignorant of before; and, in the mean time, he is not the less kissed and caressed, for it is his fate to be beloved. I supped last night at the duchess du Lude's, where I met madame de Coulanges, the first president of the court of aids, and marshal de Crequi's lady. The last, I must acknowledge, gave me pleasure by telling me, after paying you several compliments, that your son had acquired great honour in this last campaign; that she knew it from a quarter that could not be suspected; and

that he had not only distinguished himself for valour and coolness, but for prudence, having withdrawn from certain gay parties, without pretending to be a Cato, or making himself disliked; and that these were admirable prognostics: she congratulated us both; these praises, supported by a person who is not addicted to flattery, appeared to me worthy of being communicated to you.

A chapter of the widows was held yesterday, at madame de Lavardin's, when we admitted mademoiselle de la Rochefoucauld to be a member, as I have told you. It seems as if we met only to talk of you, and celebrate you. You are acquainted with the solidity of madame de Lavardin's reasoning. We joined issue upon the subject in debate, that every one should keep his place, the great without being degraded, and the others without being elevated.

M. de Grignan is in the right to exult at the praises I have given him on his son's first campaign. But he is not yet acquainted with his full value—never did he judge more wisely; but why should he suppose my eulogiums to be ironical? what! does he think me incapable of discovering the excellence of his judgement in this instance, as well as in every other? I complain in my turn, and till this quarrel can be settled, I embrace him with all my heart. This is what spoils him; for, notwithstanding so many storms and tempests, we love him still.

Madame de Broglio thinks she is going to live with you, because she is going into Languedoc. We are not yet acquainted with the destiny of La Trousse, but we have no uneasiness upon that score; he will be the handsomest of the knights; I shall see him at his own house. If M. de Grignan had assisted at the ceremony, I should

have wished to have seen him, to have been a witness of his elegant deportment.

The king of England is constantly betrayed, even by his own officers: M. de Lauzun is the only person who has not deserted him. A parliament will be convened, and it is hoped that two thirds will oppose the prince of Orange. The little prince is hitherto safe at Portsmouth. What say you to this English nation?

LETTER DCCCXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, December 22, 1688.

You have made so lively an impression upon our hearts, my dear child, and all our thoughts and actions turn so constantly upon you, and as you said, we are so assembled in your name, that we can scarcely support the idea of not seeing the dear countess enter, whom we so passionately love: I speak for the community; for your son feels keenly your absence, and the misfortune of not beholding you. I incessantly tell him to avail himself of the real happiness of having such an uncle as the chevalier; we have very useful conversations with him. When sometimes he is absent, or asks misplaced questions, he reminds me of the fable of the cat metamorphosed into a woman: she sprung away sometimes when she saw a mouse; so the marquis, who is a man, shows sometimes that he is a child; and seriously should he now be entered at the academy? examine his conduct, and you must own he is very much altered, and very much improved. I embrace him very often, and make you the pretext; for I sometimes take him by surprise, and explain to him the reason. Madame de la Fayette,

to whom his uncle introduced him, is delighted with him. I shall take him to madame de Lavardin's, who, from an excess of love and esteem, will not pay you any compliments; those who compliment you, love you too. all is well.

You will have your instructions, and the ribbon and the cross, like the rest; you will all be treated alike, whether a knight invests you with the order, or you are allowed to wear it before your reception; only have a little patience. The minister's letter is not to be considered as leave of absence: in short, we should be sorry to see M. de Grignan in the present situation of affairs: for things are in such confusion with respect to England, that every one remains at his post. The interruption of our correspondence prevented you from adopting a good resolution at first. Your prelates have deserted you; I equally admire those who build, and those who do not complete their building; the latter are indeed more insufferable, not to finish what they had begun, and thus leave your house in disorder. This deprives us of patience, and gives us the gout: this gout is neither of much importance nor very painful; but it is an impertinence and a weakness that prevents our going to Versailles as much as if it were of greater consequence. We send you some verses of madame Deshoulieres, which you will like.

Sanzei* goes sometimes to Versailles; he takes his meals at madame de Coulanges's; for instead of your excellent table, at which we were so well fed, we have nothing but a few crumbs collected: he will have a lieutenancy of dragoons: he has been in the trenches like the rest, and is satisfied. But without flattering you, the fairies have whispered about every where

* He was the son of one of M. de Coulanges's sisters.

the marquis's campaign; he pleased every body, as well by his intrepidity in danger, as by his cheerful manners and prudent conduct; there is but one opinion upon this subject. This contusion was the last gift of the last fairy, for it gave a finishing-stroke to the whole; and may properly be called the bird's wing, or the stag's foot. M. d'Avaux * must be arrived. The abbé de Guénégaud wept for madame de Memes, before he began to stammer. Madame de St. Geran † is brought to bed of a little girl; this was not worth the trouble.

LETTER DCCCXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 24, 1688.

The marquis has been to Versailles alone, where he conducted himself extremely well; he dined with M. du Maine at M. de Montausier's; supped at madame d'Armagnac's; paid his court at all the levees and all the couchees. The dauphin ordered him the wax candlestick; in short, he is thrown into the world, and he acts his part well. He is in fashion, and never had any one so fortunate an introduction, nor so high a reputation, for I should never make an end, were I to tell you of all who speak well of him. I am inconsolable to think you have not the pleasure of seeing and embracing him, as I do every day.

But does it not seem, while I am chatting to you with

* Jean Antoine de Memes, count d'Avaux, afterwards appointed ambassador extraordinary to James II. of England; he was just returned from his embassy from Holland.

† Francis Madeleine Claude de Warignies, countess de Saint Geran, lay in for the first time of a daughter, after a marriage of twenty-one years.

so much tranquillity, as if I had nothing to communicate? Listen, listen, I say, to a piece of news that is scarcely worth the trouble of relating. The queen of England and the prince of Wales, with his nurse and a single servant to rock his cradle, are expected here to-morrow. The king has sent his carriages to meet them upon the road to Calais, where the queen arrived on Tuesday last, the 21st instant, accompanied by M. de Lauzun. M. Courtin, who is just returned from Versailles, gave us the following account yesterday at madame de la Fayette's. You know that M. de Lauzun resolved about six weeks ago to go over to England; he could not better employ his leisure, and he did not desert the king of England while every one else betrayed or abandoned him. In short, on Sunday last, the 19th of this month, the king, who had formed his plan, went to bed with the queen, as usual, dismissed those who still serve him, and rose an hour after to order a valet-de-chambre to introduce a man whom he would find at the door of the antichamber; this was M. de Lauzun. The king said to him, "I intrust you with the care of the queen and my son: you must risk every thing, and endeavour to conduct them to France." M. de Lauzun thanked him, as you may suppose; but he desired to take a gentleman of Avignon with him, of the name of St. Victor, known to possess great courage and merit. St. Victor took the little prince under his cloak; he was said to be at Portsmouth, when he lay concealed in the palace. M. de Lauzun presented his hand to the queen; think what a leave-taking hers must have been with the king; and, accompanied by the two women I have mentioned to you, they went into the street, and took a hackney coach. They afterwards sailed down the river in a little boat, where they experienced such a tempest, that they knew not what would become of them. At

length, at the mouth of the Thames, they went on board a yacht, M. de Lauzun standing by the master, intending, if he proved a traitor, to throw him into the sea. But as he supposed he had only common passengers on board, which was most frequently the case, he carelessly sailed through fifty Dutch ships, who did not even notice this little bark; and thus protected by heaven, and sheltered from the threatened danger, she landed safely at Calais, where M. de Charost received the queen with all the respect imaginable. The courier, who brought the news yesterday at noon to the king, related all these particulars; and at the same time orders were sent to dispatch the king's carriages to meet this queen, and conduct her to Vincennes, which is fitting up for her. It is said the king will join her upon the road. This is the first volume of the romance, the sequel you shall have immediately. We have just been assured, that to complete the adventure, M. de Lauzun, after having put the queen and prince safely into the hands of M. de Charost, proposed returning to England with St. Victor, to share the sad and miserable fate of the king. I admire M. Lauzun's planet, which will again render his name brilliant, at the very time it appeared to be sunk in oblivion. He carried 20,000 pistoles to the king of England. This, my child, is indeed a very noble and heroic action; and what completes it is, his returning to a country where, according to all appearances, he will perish, either with the king, or by the rage into which he has thrown the people by the last stroke he has played upon them. I leave you to reflect upon this romance, and embrace you with more than common affection.

LETTER DCCCXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, December 27, 1688.

Do you know, that your little captain is on the road to Chalons, to view the fine company you have raised for him. He set out on Christmas-day to sleep at Claie, and to pay his devoirs at Livri as he passed; he will return on Sunday. The chevalier has limited his time; M. du Plessis is with him, still loaded with proofs of your esteem and confidence: you may be assured he is entirely devoted to you and your son, and what more can you desire? He seems to me, with his fierce cocked hat and his black cravat, like the marshal who turned painter for love; and indeed it was his love for your family that made him turn warrior: in short, he possesses courage, boldness, and every other virtue, with which you may do as you please. So much for M. du Plessis, whose subject is exhausted; not so the marquis: you think he is fat, but you are mistaken; on the contrary, he is more slender and shapely; he is taller; but do you suppose he can be much grown in ten weeks? So many things, my dear child, have occurred within these three months, that they appear like three years. In short, time does not gallop as it did when we were together. Solerl has given you an account of our society, which subsists only in you and for you, for you are our true link; and this pretty picture—but alas! it never says a word, and that grieves us: you are much handsomer than it, without flattering you. I showed the duchess du Lude this morning what you wrote respecting her, with which she is very much pleased; she deserved this for the remembrances she every day gives me for you.

After mass, she took me with Alliot to the abbé Tetu's: this abbé never sleeps; he is, indeed, very ill; his disorder is more than common vapours, and we cannot behold him without pity: madame de Coulanges and all his friends are very careful of him.

Nothing is talked of but the queen of England; she has desired to breathe a little at Boulogne, till she receives news from the king her husband, who has escaped from England, but no one yet knows where he is. The king has sent her three coaches and six, litters, pages, footmen, guards, lieutenants, and officers. You will find all this in good Bigorré's letter. M. de Lauzun ought to be satisfied with this adventure; he has displayed sense, judgement, good management, and courage; and has at length found the road to Versailles through St. James's; this was a discovery for him alone to make. The princess* is enraged to think that the king is satisfied at his conduct, and that he will again return to court.

The chevalier talks to me on the subject respecting which you wrote to him; I conclude you wish that it should be so, as you know what confidence is in friendship. M. Coignet was for making a match the other day between your son and little de Lamoignon, to whom M. Voisin is to give 100,000 crowns, with a promise of something better: the chevalier is highly pleased with the idea. M. de Mirepoix is to marry the daughter of

* Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who had made such great sacrifices to extricate him from prison, and to restore him to the court, had much to complain of from him. He was guilty of frequent infidelities towards her, jealous, and passionate; she quarrelled with him, drove him from her presence, and sometimes even struck him. He began to retaliate in the same way. These scenes led to a violent and decisive rupture. It appears that the princess, in making her complaints against Lauzun to the king, had requested that he might never appear again at court.

the duchess de la Ferté * with 50,000 crowns unpaid; this marriage was brought about nobody knows how. Madame de Mirepoix gives her son, who is a great match, to the most inconsiderable fortune at court. I want to know what madame de Pui-du-fou † says to this.

The ceremony (of the knights) is to be performed without eclat ‡ at Versailles in the chapel. It is to begin on Friday at vespers, is to continue on the morning of new year's day, and to finish at vespers. The king has dispensed with the obligation of receiving the sacrament at the ceremony; he will not wear his great cloak, but the collar only: cloaks are lent, so that it is plain they are not absolutely necessary. The king is highly pleased with the manner in which M. de Monaco ‖ received the order, he has said so publicly, which embarrasses those who have refused it. It is very probable that the same messenger who carries the ribbon to Monaco, will take it to M. de Grignan. This seems to me to resemble our treatment of a dog, to whom we say "hold off" one minute, and "catch" the next. The comparison is good, but I am afraid it will bring me into a quarrel with that cavilling gentleman; he will say, I treat him like a dog. Adieu, my dearest and most excellent child; I have still a hundred things to say to you, but they would overwhelm you.

* Anne Charlotte Marie de Saint Nectaire.

† Madeleine de Bellièvre marchioness du Pui-du-Fou, mother of Madeleine du Pui-du-Fou marchioness de Mirepoix, and of Marie Angelique du Pui-du-Fou M. de Grignan's second wife.

‡ "The king," says madame de la Fayette, "has a natural aversion to every thing that incommodes him."

‖ He consented to take precedence as duke de Valentinois, and not as prince de Monaco.

LETTER DCCCXXX.

TO THE SAME.

Wednesday, December 29, 1688.

THIS then is the dreadful Wednesday, in which you desired me to neglect my dear child; but all the consolation I receive after my fatigue, is to write and chat with her a little. I remember enough of Provence and Aix, and I know enough of the cause you have to complain of the election (of the consuls) which took place on St. Andrew's day, to approve of your having it annulled by the parliament. I have seen father Gaillard*, who is very glad of it; he will speak to M. de Croissi, and will transfer the whole business to M. de Grignan. A more just revenge could not take place, nor by a method more effectual to correct and cure him of the whim of displeasing you. I congratulate M. Gaillard upon it; I am really flattered at the thought of having a place in so good a head; I shall never forget his books, so full of fire and penetration. Do you not chat with him now and then?

I guess what the two months' work is that you have to perform this winter at Aix†: at the first glance it appears great and difficult; but when you are accustomed to business, being every day overwhelmed with duties

* A celebrated Jesuit, who interested himself in this affair on account of his brother M. Gaillard, a man of worth and intellect.

† Louvois, who had the superintendence of the royal buildings, formed a plan, to please his master, for bringing the river Eure to Versailles, where the fountains were supplied only by the fetid water of a pond. To execute this plan, the river must have been made to wind through eleven

and writing, you will find that the days, notwithstanding their fatigue and irksomeness, fly swiftly along. I have passed some very sorrowful ones, but the progress of time has not been arrested in consequence of them: the truth is, that at the expiration of three months, we could fancy it to be three years since our separation. Believe me, you may very well remain at Aix till after Easter; Lent is not so strictly kept there as at Grignan. The north wind of Grignan, which makes you swallow the dust of all your prelates' buildings, gives me the pain in your chest, and seems to be a little camp de Maintenon. You may make what use you please of these reflections; for my part, there is nothing I so much wish, as to work with my dear child, and end my life in loving her, and receiving the tender and pious marks of her affection; for you seem to me to be *the pious Æneas* in the form of a woman.

I have seen Sanzei, and embraced him for you: he threw himself on his knees, and kissed my feet. I inform you of his extravagances, as I would of Don Quixote's. He is no longer a musketeer; he is a lieutenant of dragoons; he has spoken to the king, who told him, that if he were attentive to his duty, care would be taken of him. In such a situation how necessary it is to him to be *Sir*, in every sense of the word! You cannot imagine how useful this title, which made us laugh so much at first, is to your son, and how much it contributes to his reputation; in short, it is the fashion to speak well of him. Madame de Verneuil, who is returned, entered yesterday upon this subject, and afterwards paid you a thousand compliments, and sent you

leagues; and two mountains, opposite Maintenon, have been made to join. Thirty thousand men, from the army, were employed in this work, the greater part of whom were destroyed by sickness. The project was at length abandoned, and has never been resumed.

a thousand remembrances. I believe madame de Coissin * will be madame d'Henrichemont, at last.

Madame de Coulanges, whom I saw this morning at La Bagnol's, told me she had received your answer, and that she would show it me to-night at the abbé Tetu's. You are now freed from this answer; but you make me lament that you thus reply singly to a hundred persons who have written to you: this is a sad fashion in France. But what shall I say to you of England, where the fashions and manners are still more terrible? M. de Lamoignon informed the chevalier, that the king of England was arrived at Boulogne; another says, at Brest; a third, that he has been arrested in England; and a fourth, that he was lost in the late dreadful storm at sea: you may chuse which you please. It is now seven o'clock, and the chevalier will not close his packet till the polite hour of eleven; if he hears any thing more to be depended upon, he will inform you of it. It is very certain that the queen will not quit Boulogne till she receives some news from her husband; she weeps and prays incessantly. The king was yesterday very uneasy respecting his Britannic majesty. Here is a wide field before us; we are very attentive to the will of the Gods,

——Et nous voulons apprendre
Ce qu'ils ont ordonné du beaupere et du gendre †.

I resume my letter, being just returned from the chevalier's apartment. Never was such a day as this known; four different reports are spread concerning the king of England, and all from authentic quarters. He is at Calais; he is at Boulogne; he is in custody in Eng-

* Madeleine Armande du Cambout was married on the 10th of August following to Maximilian de Bethune, duke de Sully and prince d'Henrichemont.

† And we wish to know how they have disposed of the father-in-law and the son-in-law. See La Mort de Pompée, a tragedy of Corneille's

land; he is cast away; nay, according to a fifth, he is at Brest; and all the rumours are so blended, that there is no knowing what to think. M. Courtin relates one account, M. de Rheims another, and M. de Lamoignon a third. The footmen are incessantly going and coming: I must therefore take my leave of my dear child, without being able to tell her any thing certain, except that I love her as her heart deserves, and my inclination prompts me; and in this career I always give the reins to my affection.

LETTER DCCCXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, December 31, 1668.

Per torner dunque al nostro proposito *, I must tell you, my child, that all the uncertainties of the day before yesterday, which seemed to be fixed by the assurances M. de Lamoignon gave us that the king of England was at Calais, are now changed into the certainty, that he is detained in England; and that if this ill fortune has not befallen him, he has perished; for he was to make his escape, and embark a few hours after the queen: so that though we have no certain intelligence of his being arrested, there is not a single person who does not now credit it. Such is our situation; and such the way in which we are closing the present year, and entering upon that of 89; a year marked out by extraordinary predictions, as pregnant with great events: not one, however, will take place that is not agreeable to the order of Providence, like all our actions, and all our journeyings. We must submit to every thing, and look

* To return then to our proposition.

boldly in the face of futurity; this is going a great way.

In the mean while, count, I address myself to you. Yesterday the knights of St. Michael went through the ceremony with several of those of the order of the Holy Ghost, at the hour I mentioned to you after vespers, and to-morrow the rest will do the same. The chevalier will inform you how it is managed with respect to the absentees. You must make your profession of faith, and give an account of your life and manners. Of this you will be duly informed; you are not the only one; and in the mean time *hold off, fair and softly*. Yesterday M. de Chevreuse, of the order of St. Michael, passed before M. de la Rochefoucault, who said to him, "Sir, you pass before me, which you have no right to do." M. de Chevreuse replied, "Sir, I have a right, for I am duke de Luynes." "Oh, sir," rejoined the other, "in this respect I yield to you." The gazette will inform you, my dear count, that M. de Luynes has given this duchy to his son, with the king's permission; and M. de Chevreuse, who will henceforward be called M. de Luynes, the duchy of Chevreuse to his son, who will be styled duke de Montfort. Your son's comrades are highly distinguished by titles. It is said that some troops are to be sent into Britany with M. de Momont, major-general, to be under the command of M. de Chaulnes; there will be encampments in all the provinces. You need only refer to the map, to judge whether we have occasion to be on our guard on all sides: cast your eyes for a moment over all Europe. Madame de Barillon is very uneasy respecting her husband*; but it is said at random, for no letters arrive, that he is safe, though the chapel of the king of England has been pulled down, as well as that belonging

* M. de Barillon was the French ambassador in England.

to the ambassador's household; time will clear up all this.—But who am I speaking to? is it still to this count? My dear child, your good lady, who swore she would not touch a card till the king of England had won a battle, will not probably play again for a long time; poor woman! the prince of Orange is in London —this is still the subject of my letter, as it is of all conversation, for every one considers himself as concerned in this great scene. The queen is still in a convent at Boulogne, always in tears at the absence of her husband, whom she passionately loves.

Madame de Brinon is quite forgotten. A new comedy is said to be in rehearsal, which is to be represented at St. Cyr, and is called Esther. The carnival does not promise to be very gay. My son's letters are constantly filled with the most affectionate sentiments for you and M. de Grignan. We expect your letters, but probably shall not answer them till Monday. The chevalier and I have very long conversations about you; he is tolerably well, and when your son returns from Chalons, he intends to accompany him to Versailles. The good Corbinelli exhausts his rhetoric upon the present situation of affairs, and at the same time adores you. Adieu, my lovely child; I embrace you a thousand times, and wish you a happy year in that of 1689.

LETTER * DCCCXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, January 3, [illegible].

Your dear son arrived this morning. We were delighted to see him and M. du Plessis: we were at dinner when they came, and they ate very heartily of our repast, which was already somewhat impaired. Oh that you could have heard all the marquis said of the beauty of his company! He first asked if the company was arrived; and on the question, whether it was a fine one, this was the answer he received: "Indeed, sir, it is; it is one of the finest that ever were seen; *it is an old company*, and more to be prized than the *new ones*." You may guess the effect such an encomium must have on a person who was not known to be the captain. Our boy was in raptures the next day at the sight of his noble company mounted: the men, made on purpose, as it were, and selected by you, and the horses cast in the same mould, gave him such high spirits, that M. de Chalons † and madame de Noailles (his mother) entered into his feelings of joy. He has been received by these pious persons as the son of M. de Grignan: but why do I tell you all this? it is the marquis's business.

I was on the point of making some enquiry respecting madame d'Oppède, and you anticipate my curiosity; I fancy she proves a valuable addition to your society, and perhaps the only good companion you have. As to M. d'Aix, I confess I would not give credit to what the Provençals say of him; I recollect that they are made up of gossiping, which constitutes

† Louis Antoine de Noailles, bishop de Chalons sur Marne, afterwards archbishop and cardinal of Paris.

the whole business of their lives, and that they talk merely for the sake of employment. Neither must M. d'Aix be implicitly believed: and yet how can we think that a man, who has been *all his life a courtier*, and who swears by every thing sacred, that he cares not for the intrigues of consuls, would dishonour himself before God and man by perjury? But you are the person to judge, being upon the spot.

The installation of your brother-knights took place at Versailles on new year's day. Coulanges is returned from thence; he gives you a thousand thanks for your pretty letter. I admire every thought that occupies your pen, and how justly and happily it is turned. He told me the ceremony began on Friday, as I informed you: the first installed were professors, with their magnificent habits and collars. Saturday was fixed for the two marshals of France: the marshal de Bellefond made himself completely ridiculous, as either to avoid parade, or from carelessness, he had neglected to put ribbons to his breeches, by which means they left him almost bare. The whole troop was magnificent; M. de la Trousse the most so; but by some accident his wig was discomposed, and turned almost round, so that one side of his head was bald; he kept tugging, without being able to remove the inconvenience, which did not a little disconcert him. But M. de Montchevreuil and M. de Villars so completely entangled themselves; their swords, ribbons, lace, and spangles were so mixed, jumbled, confounded, and all the little crooked particles so completely interwoven*; that it was not in the power of man to separate them, and the more this was attempted the more entangled they became, like the rings of

* Allusion to the crooked atoms which, according to Epicurus, form the elementary parts of matter, and of the generality of beings.

Rogero's* arms. In short, the whole ceremony, the bows, and all the proceedings, were interrupted; it was necessary to separate them by force, and the strongest gained the day. But the most ridiculous scene of all, which entirely destroyed the gravity of the ceremony, was the carelessness of good M. de Hocquincourt, who, having dressed himself in the manner of the Provençals and the Bretons, his breeches fitting him less commodiously than those he usually wore, his shirt would not be confined in them, in spite of all he could do; for, knowing its situation, he was continually endeavouring to adjust it properly, but without success; at length the dauphiness could no longer refrain from bursting into a loud laugh: the king's majesty was almost shaken, and in all the archives of the order, no precedent of such an adventure can be found; it was completely ridiculous. It is certain, my dear child, that if my son-in-law had been present at this ceremony, I should have been there too; there was plenty of room, many having supposed they should be stifled, which was the case at the Carousel. The next day the court was dazzled with

* Ariosto represents the handsome Rogero at the moment when, having delivered Angelica, who was naked, and on the point of being devoured, like Andromeda, by a sea-monster, the young warrior hastened to lay aside his armour to reward himself for his valour by her charms. In his eagerness he made more knots than he untied. It is thus he draws this charming picture:

Frettoloso or da questo or da quel canto
Confusamente l'arme si levava:
Non gli parve altra volta mai star tanto,
Che s'un laccio scioglica, due n'annodava.

And now the glowing youth with eager haste
Impatient from his limbs the steel unbrac'd;
By turns this plate, confus'd, then that he tried,
And while he loosen'd one, another tied.

Orlando Furioso, Hoole's Trans. book x.

blue ribbons; young men with fine figures wear them over their coats, the others underneath. You would have had your choice, at least with respect to shape. I am told that the absent knights will be ordered to wear the ribbon the king sends them with the cross. This the chevalier is to communicate to you. So much for the chapter of blue ribbons.

The king of England was taken, it is said, in a hunting dress, endeavouring to make his escape. He is at Whitehall. He has an officer, and his guards, and his lords in waiting; but this is kept very secret. The prince of Orange is at St. James's, which is on the other side of the park. The parliament is to be assembled: God conduct this bark. The queen of England will be here on Wednesday; she comes to St. Germain to be near the king and his bounty.

The abbe Tetu is still an object of compassion; opium has seldom any effect upon him; if he sleeps a little, it is merely because the dose is doubled. I give your compliments to every one to whom you send them. The widows are devoted to you upon earth, and in the third heaven. On new year's day I was at madame Croiset's; I there met Rubantel, who spoke highly of your son, of his growing reputation, his good disposition, and his prowess at Philipsburg. It is said, that M. de Lauzun was three quarters of an hour with the king; if this continues, you may easily guess who will be glad to see him again.

LETTER *DCCCXXXIII.

MADAME DE GRIGNAN TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY †.

Aix, January 4, 1690.

I SHOULD have been, at least, as glad to have seen your name, sir, among those of the knights of the order, as you were to see M. de Grignan's there; and I should not have been more uneasy respecting your claims, than you were respecting his. I assure you, sir, that it is with real concern, I find you are not one of those who have been honoured with this dignity, though you have been so long a lieutenant-general in the army. I ought to feel thus, in gratitude for your joy at our good fortune. But I have no need of this stimulus, the interest I take in all that concerns you being sufficient. What you tell me of your submission, in your adversity, to the decrees of Providence, and of the use you make on these occasions of your philosophy and religion, appears to me so worthy and estimable, that I doubt whether it would not be more reasonable to congratulate you upon these, than on all the transient favours that the world can bestow. As this, however, is not customary, I will content myself with applauding and admiring you, and will reserve my compliments for the favour the king has granted to your sons. I should have done this sooner, if I had known it, but I am at the extremity of the globe, and the situation of Provence is but too well calculated to justify me to all those who do not hear from me, at a time when they know I would not be silent. Think me not, therefore, the less sensible

† This letter is the answer to one in which he congratulated her on the favour obtained by her husband. It is not particularly interesting, but we have so few of this lady's letters, that we should have reproached ourselves if we had suppressed it.

to your interests, since no one can honour you more highly than I do.

LETTER DCCCXXXIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, January 5, 1689.

I TOOK the marquis with me yesterday; we began by visiting M. de la Trousse, who was so obliging as to put on the dresses of the novice and professor, as on the ceremonial day; these two habits set off a fine figure to advantage. A foolish thought, without considering consequences, made me regret that the fine shape of M. de Grignan had not shone upon this occasion. The page's dress is very becoming; and I am not at all surprised that the princess of Cléves should fall in love with M. de Nemours and his handsome legs *. The mantle has all the magnificence of royalty; it cost La Trousse 800 pistoles, for he purchased it. After having viewed this pretty masquerade, I took your son to all the ladies in the neighbourhood. Madame de Vaubecourt and madame Ollier received him with great politeness; he will soon pay visits upon his own account.

The Life of St. Louis has induced me to read Mézerai; I was willing to take a view of the last kings of the second race, and I want to unite Philip de Valois with king John: this is an admirable period of history, upon which the abbé de Choisi has written a book that may be read with interest. We endeavour to beat into your son's head, the necessity of being a little acquainted with what has passed before his time; and it will have effect: but, in the meanwhile, there are many

* Allusion to madame de la Fayette's romance.

reasons for paying attention to what is passing at present. You will see by the news of to-day, how the king of England escaped from London, apparently with the consent of the prince of Orange. Politicians reason upon this subject, and ask if it be more advantageous for this king to be in France; some say Yes, because he is here in security, and will not run the risk of being compelled to give up his wife and child, or lose his head; others say No, because he leaves the prince of Orange to enjoy the protectorship, and be adored, having made his way to it naturally, and without bloodshed. It is certain, that war will soon be declared against us, or perhaps, even we may declare it first. If we make peace in Italy and Germany, we may apply ourselves with greater attention to the English and Dutch war; this is to be hoped, for it would be too much to have enemies on all sides. You see whither my rambling pen leads me; but you may easily suppose, that all conversations turn upon these great events.

I conjure you, my dear child, when you write to M. de Chaulnes, to tell him you enter into the obligations he has conferred upon my son, and thank him for them; that the great distance between you does not render you insensible to your brother's welfare: the subject of this acknowledgment is somewhat new; it is to excuse him from commanding the first regiment of militia, which he is raising in Britany. My son cannot endure the idea of returning into the service in such a manner; he is shocked at it, and desires only to be forgotten in his own country. This sentiment meets the approbation of the chevalier, and mine also I confess; do you not approve it too, my dear child? I always consider your opinion of great importance, and your judgment good, particularly with regard to your brother. Do not enter into particulars; but say in general terms, what pleases

the brother, must give satisfaction to the sister. M. de Momont is gone into Britany with troops, but in such subjection to M. de Chaulnes, that it is quite wonderful. The beginning is pleasant, we must attend to the sequel.

I met Choiseul yesterday with his ribbon, he is very well; we must be greatly out of luck, not to meet five or six every day. Did I tell you that the king has taken away the communion from the ceremony? This I have long wished; I place the beauty of this action almost upon a par with that of abolishing duelling *. Consider, in fact, what would have been the consequence of blending this holy act with the immoderate mirth excited by M. de Hocquincourt's shirt †. Many, however, performed their devotions, but without ostentation, and without being compelled. We are preparing for the reception of their Britannic majesties, who are expected at St. Germain. The dauphiness will take precedence of this queen, because, though not a queen, she is the representative of one. My child, I am constantly wishing for you, constantly regretting your absence; I see all your engagements, know all your reasons; but I cannot habituate myself to the idea of not finding you, where you would be so necessary; this reflection often grieves me. This is a very unimportant letter; do not trouble yourself to answer it; be careful of your health, and your lungs.

* As a good Jansenist, madame de Sévigné every where disapproves frequent communion.

† See the Letter of January 3, 1689.

LETTER *DCCCXXXV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 6, 1689.

I BEGIN, my dear cousin, by wishing you a happy year, which is the same thing as wishing you the continuance of your christian philosophy, for this it is which constitutes true happiness. I cannot understand how it is possible to have a moment's peace in this world, without looking to God and his will, to which we must from necessity submit. With this support, a support with which we cannot dispense, we find strength and courage to endure the greatest misfortunes. I wish you, therefore, my dear cousin, the continuance of this blessing, for, be assured, it is one: it is not in ourselves we find resources. I will not, however, recall to mind what you ought to have been, and are not: my friendship for you, and regard for myself, have suffered but too much; let us think no more of this. It is the will of God, and I subscribe to all you say upon the subject. The court is full of blue ribbons; we can pay no visits without meeting four or five at a house. This ornament could not have come more opportunely, to show respect to the king and queen of England, who are to arrive to-day at St. Germain, not, as it was reported, at Vincennes. This day will truly be the feast of kings†, very agreeable to him who protects and serves for a refuge, and very melancholy to him who is in need of an asylum. These are grand objects, and grand subjects for meditation and conversation. The politicians have much to say. There is no doubt that the prince of Orange suffered the king to escape, in order to render

† The day of the Epiphany, or Twelfth-day.

himself master of England, without the weight of a crime on his conscience; and the king, on his side, was in the right to leave the country, rather than risk his life with a parliament who killed the late king his father, though he was of their religion. These are such extraordinary events, that it is difficult to conjecture how they will terminate, particularly when we cast our eyes over Europe, and view its state and disposition. The same Providence which over-rules all, will unravel all; we are only blind and ignorant spectators. Adieu; I embrace you, and my dear niece, whom I pity for being obliged to have recourse to bleeding on account of her eyes. Here, my dear Corbinelli, take my pen.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

I BEGIN, sir, like madame de Sévigné, by wishing you a happy year; in other words, health of body, and peace of mind:

——Mens sana in corpore sano,

as Juvenal says, who understands all the comforts of life. I was angry, not to see you in the list of the knights of the order; an arrangement God had made in the world without my knowledge, and without my consent, that is, which I would have changed if I could. This sort of philosophy exempts all secondary causes from my imprudent wrath, and makes me submit in an instant to every thing that happens to my friends or to myself. I say the same of the flight of the king of England with his whole family. I interrogate the Almighty, and ask him, if he abandons the catholic religion, by suffering the prince of Orange to prosper, who is the protector of the protestants; and then I cast my eyes to the ground. Adieu, sir; adieu, madame de

Coligny, to whom I wish a sufficient stock of christian philosophy, to enable her to be perfectly indifferent to all worldly concerns: a state capable of making us kings, and more truly kings than those who bear the name.

LETTER DCCCXXXVI.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 7, 1689.

I RECEIVED your letter a day later than usual; I expect to hear from you again to-day, but as the post does not come in till late, we shall not answer you till Sunday or Monday. You write so well, my dear child, when you have no particular subject, that I am as well pleased with these epistles, as with those which are replies to mine. In short, my heart finds no relief but this during your absence; I am in the same situation as you, counting the immensity of time since your departure: three months seem as many years; not from my having seen such a variety of objects as you, but from the different thoughts, occupations, and uneasinesses, which have supplied the place of objects. I have regretted, and still regret, you daily; how, indeed, can I give up the sight and society of my dear child, after having been so long and so agreeably accustomed to them? That fatal day of Charenton is still fresh and lively in my remembrance. You had made an appointment with me at the chevalier's, which I did not fail to attend; but you did not come; your picture was a poor substitute. I am now in his apartment; he has had pains in his right hand all the night, and they still continue. He supped the evening before Twelfth-night with M. de Lamoignon, and was in high spirits; and in the night he was seized

with this disorder, which is very lamentable. He is daily forming plans for going to Versailles, and scarcely ever able to execute them: it is a misfortune both for you and for him, that he is prevented from going to a place where he would make so good a figure, and be so useful to his family and his nephew. He is possessed of patience and resignation, which Corbinelli boasts of having taught him. We seldom see this Corbinelli; his friends take him away, and I let him go through friendship for him, for we are considerate. He sometimes supps with us; he is very good company, and returns you a thousand thanks for having mentioned his name; yours is more strongly impressed on his mind than any other. We do not see the abbé Bigorré so often as we wish; he will send you a whole sheet to-night. When the subject is the arrival of the king and queen of England, and the prince of Wales, with the particulars of the gracious, humane, and affectionate reception the king gave these princes, you may guess that the paper will be filled.

I am impatient to hear that you have received your ribbon. M. le Grand, M. de Dangeau, M. de Châtillon, M. de la Rongère, wore theirs, in compliment to the queen of England, when they waited upon her: she will find our court very brilliant with this new ornament. I took your son yesterday to madame de Lavardin's, who received him as her grandson, for she loves you like a daughter: from thence we went to madame de la Fayette's, where we met M. de Villars *, looking a perfect *Orondates*; I informed him of all you desired

* Peter, marquis de Villars, father to the late marshal duke of that name, was known in the world by the name of *Orondates*, on account of his fine person and great courage. He had been ambassador in Savoy, Spain, and Denmark.

me to tell him. I suppose there will be many balls this winter at Versailles.

Madame de Ricouart is a widow: she is still in the country, I shall see her upon her return; shall I give your compliments to her? The omission is sometimes better than the presentation; for instance, madame de Lavardin always told me, that she sent no compliments to you.: I have found many persons of this way of thinking, who do not wish to offend you; you may therefore believe on my word of honour, that all is well, and that those who do not overwhelm you with ceremony, are more agreeable than those who do; for your answers would be without number, and you have already enough of the fatigues of writing. You wish me to write to madame de Solre*; good heavens, what a tax do you impose upon me! I must adopt a style that will be like putting on the buskin. Coulanges told us a very ridiculous story the other day, with great humour. He said that the count de Solre waited upon M. de Chauvri †, followed by two porters, carrying two trunks, which they could with difficulty stand under; that having brought them in and set them down, he drew from out the first that was opened, an immense bundle of papers, and said to him, throwing them upon the table, "These, sir, are the titles of thirty-seven knights of the Golden Fleece, of my family;" that M. de Chauvri, greatly embarrassed, said to him, "Oh, sir, there is no occasion for so many; you disorder all my papers; I shall not know where to find the titles of Mr. such a one, and those of Mr. such a one, whose names are not at all like yours;" that M. de Chauvri entreated him to pro-

* Anna Maria Frances de Bournonville, countess of Solre.

† Genealogist of the king's orders of knighthood.

duce no more papers; but that the count de Solre, paying no attention to him, took out another great bundle, saying, "This, sir, is the marriage-contract of one of my grandfathers with Sabina of Bavaria." "Good God, sir," said M. de Chauvri, "here is already more than sufficient!" M. de Solre then took up a large roll of parchment, and, with the assistance of a servant, spread it all over the room, and showed him that he descended from two crowned heads, by two different branches of his family, M. de Chauvri exclaiming all the while, "Sir, sir, I shall never be able to find my papers again!" Coulanges acted this scene with so much drollery and humour, that, flat as it may appear on paper, the representation amused us highly. What then would you have me to say to this woman covered with golden fleeces? We must rejoice with the order of the Holy Ghost, at having so great a personage among us: I will not engage to write. This may properly be called small talk. I am with the chevalier, who is nodding in his great chair. I seem to chat with you as much as possible; but do not take the pains to answer all this. If I were with you, I should like to afford you some consolation, in talking of your affairs, of which I so often think, and in which I am so deeply interested. In the mean time, do not please the Provençals so highly, as to break with the archbishop and intendants; you would gratify them too much: let truth be the result of your own inquiry; and, let them say what they will, give them to understand that you will yourself obtain an explanation from these gentlemen. Ah, how soon would the fear of being discovered make them silent! for they aim at nothing but the propagation of idle stories, without having truth or your interest at heart. If this advice be good, follow it. I thought I saw, when I was at Lambesc, that the chief pleasure of the Provençals

consisted in creating misunderstandings, and making themselves busybodies. Fie, fie! lay aside these provincial and Provençal manners.

LETTER DCCCXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, January 10, 1689.

We often stumble upon the same ideas, my dear child; I even think that I wrote to you from the Rocks what you say in your last letter respecting time. I now consent that it should fly; the days have no longer any thing so dear and precious for me, as I found them to contain when you were at the hôtel de Carnavalet. I enjoyed, I made the most of, every hour; I treasured it as a miser does his gold; but in absence, the case is different; time cannot fly fast enough till the wished for period arrives; we hurry it along, and would willingly dispose of all the intermediate space in favour of the days to which we aspire: it is a piece of tapestry which we are eager to finish; we are lavish of hours, and bestow them on any one. But I own, that when I reflect on the point to which this profusion of hours and days leads me, I tremble. I am no longer certain of any, and reason presents me with the image of what I am certain to find in my way. My child, I will put an end to these reflections with you, and endeavour to turn them to my own advantage.

The abbé Têtu is in an alarming way for want of sleep. The physicians would not answer for his intellects; he is sensible of his situation, which is an additional calamity: he is kept alive merely by opium; he seeks for diversion and amusement, and accordingly frequents public places. We want him to go to Versailles

to see the king and queen of England, and the prince of Wales. Can there be a grander spectacle, or one more capable of affording the highest interest? It appears that the prince of Orange favoured the king's flight. The king was sent to Exeter, where it was his intention to go; the front of his house was well guarded, and all the back-doors left open. The prince was not inclined to sacrifice his father-in-law; he remains in London in the place of the king, without taking upon himself the title, being only desirous of restoring what he thinks the true religion, and supporting the laws of the country, without spilling a drop of blood: this is precisely the reverse of what we thought of him; we see him in a very different point of view. Our king however acts in a manner almost divine with respect to their Britannic majesties; for is it not being the representative of the Almighty, to support a king banished, betrayed, and abandoned? The noble ambition of our sovereign is gratified by acting this part; he went to meet the queen, with all his household, and a hundred coaches and six. When he perceived the prince of Wales's carriage, he alighted and affectionately embraced him; he then ran to the queen, who was by this time alighted; he saluted her, talked with her some time, placed her at his right hand in his carriage, and presented the dauphin and Monsieur to her, who were also in the carriage, and conducted her to St. Germain, where she found every thing prepared for her like a queen, all sorts of apparel, and a rich casket containing six thousand louis-d'ors. The king of England was expected the next day at St. Germain, where the king waited for him; he arrived late: his majesty went to the end of the guard-room to meet him; the king of England made an inclination, as if to embrace his knees, but the king prevented him, and embraced him three or four times very cordially.

They talked together in a low voice for nearly a quarter of an hour; the king presented the dauphin and Monsieur to him, the princes of the blood, and cardinal de Bonzi. He conducted him to the queen's apartment, who could scarcely refrain from tears; after a conversation of a few minutes his majesty led them to the apartment of the prince of Wales, where they again conversed for some time, and he then withdrew, not choosing to be attended back, saying to the king, "This is your house; when I come you will do the honours of it, and I will do the honours of mine when you come to Versailles." The next day, which was yesterday, the dauphiness went there with all the court. I know not how they regulated the chairs, for they had those belonging to the queen of Spain; and the queen-mother of England was treated as a daughter of France; I shall hereafter send you these particulars. His majesty sent the king of England ten thousand louis-d'ors; the latter looks old and fatigued; the queen is thin, with fine black eyes swelled with weeping; a fine complexion, but rather pale; a large mouth, beautiful teeth, a fine figure, and a great share of sense; no wonder if with all these she pleases every one who beholds her. Here is matter for general conversation, that will not soon be exhausted.

The poor chevalier can neither write nor go to Versailles, which grieves us sadly, as he has a thousand things to do there; but he is not ill: on Saturday he supped with madame de Coulanges, madame de Vauvineux, M. de Duras, and your son, at the lieutenant's, where the healths of the first and second were drank, that is to say, madame de la Fayette's and yours, for you have yielded to the date of friendship. Yesterday madame de Coulanges gave a very pretty supper to the gouty gentlemen, the abbé de Marsillac, the chevalier

de Grignan, and M. de Lamoignon, whose nephritic complaints stood him in stead of the gout: his wife and the *divinities* were admitted in consequence of colds which they are never without; I in consideration of the rheumatism I had twelve years ago, and Coulanges, for deserving to have the gout. There was no scarcity of conversation; the little man sung, and gave the abbé de Marsillac great pleasure, which he expressed by his admiration, and by imitating the tones and manners, which reminded me so strongly of his father that I could not help being affected. Your son was at the mesdemoiselles de Castelnau's; there is a younger sister, very pretty, and very agreeable, who is quite to your son's taste, and he leaves the squint-eyed girl to Sanzei: he took a hautboy with him, and they danced till midnight. This society is very pleasant to the marquis, as he meets Saint Hérem, Janin, Choiseul, and Ninon there; so that he is not in a foreign country. The chevalier does not seem to be in haste to marry him, nor does M. de Lamoignon seem very desirous of marrying his daughter. We can say nothing with respect to the marriage of M. de Mirepoix *, this is the work of M. de Montfort: people seem to be infatuated, or else their heads are turned, for they do not think as they used to do; in short, this man seems impelled by his destiny, and what can be done in such a case?

M. de Lauzun is not gone back to England: he has an apartment at Versailles, and is perfectly satisfied; he has written to Mademoiselle to have the honour of seeing her, which has given her great offence. I have performed a master-piece; I have been to visit madame

* Gaston John Baptist de Levis, marquis de Mirepoix, married January 16, 1689, to Anne Charlotte Maria de Saint Nectaire, daughter of Henry Francis, duke de la Ferté, and of Mary Gabriel Angelica de la Motte Houdancourt.

de Ricouart, who is lately returned, very well pleased at being a widow. You have nothing to do but appoint me to complete your acknowledgements, like your romances, do you recollect? I thank the amiable Paulina for her letter, I am confident her person would please me: so she could then find no appellation for me but that of *madam**? this is being very serious. Adieu, my dear child; preserve your health, in other words, your beauty, which I so much admire.

LETTER DCCCXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, January 10, 1689.
ten o'clock at night.

I HAVE paid a visit to madame du Pui-du-fou upon this marriage. Madame de Montausier and madame de Lavardin came there at the same time: I told madame de Lavardin that you sent your remembrances to her; she has a great affection for you. The next moment a brilliant group appeared; it consisted of the duchess de la Ferté, leading her daughter, who is very pretty, and

* It must have been observed that the marquis de Grignan followed this etiquette with his mother, which was the custom among persons of high rank, and particularly in the southern provinces, where the Roman laws gave fathers an absolute power over their children, which inspired children with more respect than love, and exacted the forms of submission, even in the overflowings of the heart. Madame de Sévigné was averse to this false dignity, the most gloomy mask that love can assume; and it has been seen that she even laughed at her daughter, who, in speaking of her grandfather, had written to her, *monsieur votre père*. Every one knows the humourous speech of the great Condé, before a man who affected to say Monsieur and Madame in speaking of his relations: "Monsieur my groom, go and tell monsieur my coachman, to put messieurs my horses to monsieur my coach."

her little sister, dressed alike *, the duchess d'Aumont †, and M. de Mirepoix, who formed a wonderful contrast. What an uproar! what volleys of compliments flew on every side! The duchess was always desirous of this match with M. de Mirepoix, and threw her net accordingly. When she found that the proposal was well received, she mentioned it to the king; this brought every thing to a conclusion. The king said to her, "Madam, your daughter is very young." "That is true, sire, but the affair is urgent, because I wish M. de Mirepoix to marry her, and ten years hence, when your majesty is acquainted with his merit, and has recompensed it, he will want nothing more of us:" thus it was settled, and the banns are published before the articles are drawn; never were there so many *carts before horses*. Madame d'Olonne ‡ was very eloquent; madame de la Ferté brilliant: all are satisfied; madame de Mirepoix has written to you; madame du Pui-du-fou || is drawn into the whirlwind; nobody can be heard in the hubbub. The young man had never seen his mistress; he does not know what to make of all this. My pen is good for nothing, and I wish you good night, my dear love.

* Catharine Louisa de St. Nectaire, married July 1698, to Francis Thibaut, marquis de la Carte, afterwards marquis de la Ferté.

† Francis Angelica de la Mothe Houdancourt, elder sister of the duchess de la Ferté.

‡ Catherine Henrietta d'Angemos, countess d'Olonne, elder sister of Magdalen d'Angemos, wife of marshal de la Ferté.

|| Madame de Bellièvre, marchioness du Pui-du-fou, mother of madame de Mirepoix.

LETTER DCCCXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 12, 1689.

You retired then at five o'clock in the afternoon; you drew king and queen at dinner; you were in as good company as at Paris. It will not be my fault if the archbishop (of Aix) does not know that you are satisfied with him; I informed madame de la Fayette of this the other day, who was much pleased with the information; she enjoins you both to lay aside the spirit and way of thinking of Provence. But to come to the king and queen of England. It is so extraordinary to have this court here, that it is the constant subject of conversation. The regulation of rank and precedency is to be attended to, in order to render life agreeable to those who are so unlikely to be restored. This the king said the other day, adding, that the English king was the best man in the world; that he should hunt with him; that he should come to Marli and Trianon; and that the courtiers should habituate themselves to him. The king of England does not give his hand to the dauphin, and does not reconduct him. The queen has not kissed Monsieur, who is offended at this; she said to the king, "Tell me what you wish me to do; if you would have me follow the French fashion, I will salute whom you please; but it is not the custom in England to salute any one." She paid a visit to the dauphiness, who was ill, and who received her in bed. No one sits in England; I believe the duchesses will follow the French fashion, and behave to her as they

did to her mother-in-law *. We are greatly taken up with this new court.

In the mean time, the prince of Orange is in London, where he has imprisoned several lords; he is severe, and will soon make himself hated. M. Schomberg is commander-in-chief in Holland, in the room of this prince, and his son is to have the reversion: so the mask is now completely thrown off.

I send you a list of the changes expected amongst the intendants. M. de Pomereuil is to be in Britany: God grant M. de Luxembourg may not have the command of the troops there; this would be a doleful affair for our friends †! We tremble at the thought of it. You know that marshal de Lorges is going into Guienne with St. Ruth under him. In short, we are preparing to be upon our guard both at home and abroad. Consider how many troops, and what strength, are necessary to attend to so many things at once.

The chevalier is always fixed to his chair in his apartment; it has been judged improper for him to be out at night; and this situation, which disables him from going to Versailles, is very mortifying to him. I wish I could afford him some consolation and amusement; but the gloomy disposition occasioned by the gout, makes every thing indifferent to him. I should be glad to be serviceable to him; but, to my great regret, I am quite useless. I am constantly making your compliments, and endeavouring to please him by your kind remembrances. Madame de Coulanges is full of acknowledgements; she bids me say a thousand kind things for her. She is wholly taken up with the abbé Têtu, who is really

* Henrietta of France, daughter of Henry IV., and wife of Charles I. king of England.

† M. and madame de Chaulnes.

very ill; he is at least troubled with low spirits and an inability to sleep, which the power of opium fails to remove.

Your son is a very pretty fellow; he was yesterday at the opera with the dauphin. He has written to M. de Carcassonne, and will write to him again; the friendship of this uncle must be kept up to produce any effect, and I will take care that he does not neglect him. You paint to me in very natural colours the deformity of your bridegrooms; and I fancy myself present at the nuptials. I am very well pleased that, contrary to your custom, you have told M. de Gaillard of the impression his merit and his penetrating looks have made upon me. The marriage of M. de Mirepoix seems to be the effect of magic.

LETTER DCCCXL.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, January 14, 1689.

I HAVE dined, my dear child, and am now in the chevalier's apartment; he is in his chair, with a thousand little aches and pains that fly about him. He has slept well; but this confinement affects his spirits, and vexes him exceedingly: I too am grieved at it, as I know the ill consequences better than any one. It is very cold; the thermometer is at the lowest degree; our river is frozen; it snows, freezes, and thaws at the same time; there is no walking in the streets; I keep to the house, and to the chevalier's chamber. If I could have an answer from you before the end of a fortnight, I would desire you to tell me whether I do not incommode him, by staying with him all day; but as I have no time to lose, I put this question to himself, and I fancy he is

not displeased at it. The weather is an additional cause of his illness; it is not the sort he likes; it is always unfavourable when it is extreme.

I have reminded M. de Lamoignon of your solicitation in favour of M. B****; this man will be equally sensible of your gratitude, whether at a distance, or near. I like that the feelings of gratitude should not be transient: but some persons of my acquaintance are so completely divested of it, that they substitute aversion and rudeness in its stead.

M. de Gobelin is still at St. Cyr: madame de Brinon is at Maubuisson, where she will soon be tired; she can never remain long in a place; she has made many agreements, and been in several convents; her good sense does not screen her from this error. Madame de Maintenon is much pleased with the comedy † which she has made her young ladies of St. Cyr perform; it will be a very fine piece according to report. She has paid a visit to the queen of England, who, having made her wait a moment, said she was very sorry she had lost

† It was the superieure Brinon who first made the pensioners of St. Cyr perform pieces of her selection. They were ill chosen. Cinna, and afterwards Andromache, were substituted in their room. But there was so much love in this last tragedy, and the young ladies played it so well, that it was not judged proper for their representation. This was what madame de Maintenon wrote herself to Racine, at the same time desiring him to supply another poem, moral or historical. Racine hesitated: he wished to please the court, but the public and posterity withheld him. He deemed it impossible to fill the frame that was given him, by a performance worthy of his muse. Boileau too despaired of it. Racine thought of the subject of Esther; and his friend considered it well judged, as it really was. This very Boileau, the severity of whose taste and character made him so much aspersed, gave, in his regard for Racine, the most perfect example of friendship; an example, perhaps, that will never again be met with between two men gifted with the same kind of superiority.

any time in seeing and conversing with her, and received her extremely well. Every one is pleased with this queen; she has an excellent understanding. She said to the king, on seeing him caress the prince of Wales, who is a lovely child, "I formerly envied the happiness of my son, in not feeling his misfortunes; but I now pity him, for being insensible to your majesty's caresses and kindness." All she says is proper and to the purpose; but this is not the case with her husband: he has a great share of courage, but his understanding is not above the common standard; he relates what has passed in England with an insensibility, that excites the same feeling for himself. He is a good man*, and partakes of all the amusements of Versailles. The dauphiness does not intend to visit this queen; she wants her right-hand seat and chair of state, which cannot be; she will therefore be always in bed, when the queen visits her. Madame is to have an arm-chair upon the left hand, and the princesses of the blood are to visit with her; before whom they have tabourets only. The duchesses will be upon the same footing as at the dauphiness's; this is settled. The king, knowing that a king of France gave a prince of Wales only a chair on the left hand, chooses that the king of England should treat the dauphin in the same manner, and precede him. He is to receive Monsieur without chair or ceremony. The queen has saluted him, saying to our sovereign what I told you. It is not yet certain that M. de Schomberg is to succeed the prince of Orange in Holland. This is a year of falsehood. The marchioness (d'Huxelles) contradicts

* The archbishop of Rheims, brother of M. de Louvois, seeing him come out of the chapel of Versailles said: "What a good man! he has given up three kingdoms for one mass."

every post the news she related the preceding one: is this knowing what passes? I detest inventions.

M. de Lauzun's star is returning to its former dimness, he has no apartment: all the romantic and marvellous part of his adventure is forgotten, and it now contains nothing extraordinary. Such is the world, and such are the times!

LETTER DCCCXLI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, January 17, 1689.

My letter, then, is dignified with a title: this is a proof of its singular merit. I am glad my story amused you. I can never guess at the effect my letters will produce, but this has been a happy one.

If you sought an opportunity of coming to an explanation with the archbishop, instead of suffering the misunderstanding which people endeavour to create between you to ferment, a short time would clear up the whole, or you would silence chatterers; either of these is desirable, and you will find good result from it; you will put an end, it is true, to the amusement of the Provençals; but it is only silencing ridiculous impertinence. M. de Barillon is arrived; he has found a family group with many of whose faces he was not acquainted. He is grown very fat, and said to M. de Harlai, "Sir, do not remind me of my fat, and I will say nothing to you of your lean." He is very lively, and much of the same disposition as his namesake whom you know. I will pay all your compliments to him, when they will not appear forced: I have done so with regard to madame de Sully, who returns you a

thousand with a very good grace; and to the countess*, who is too witty upon M. de Lauzun, whom she wished to raise to the pinnacle of honour, and who has neither an apartment at Versailles, nor the free admittance he formerly had. He is merely returned to court, and his exploit does not appear so extraordinary, though a very pretty romance was at first made out of it.

This English court is quite established at St. Germain; they would not accept more than 15,000 livres a month, and have regulated their court upon that foundation. The queen is very much liked; our king converses very pleasantly with her; she has good sense without affectation. The king wished the dauphiness to pay her the first visit, but she was always so conveniently indisposed, that this queen paid her a visit three days ago, admirably dressed; a black velvet robe, a beautiful petticoat, her hair tastefully disposed, a figure like the princess de Conti's, and great dignity of manner. The king received her as she alighted; she went first into his apartment, where she had a chair below the king's; here she remained half an hour; he then conducted her to the dauphiness, who was up; this occasioned a little surprise; the queen said to her, "I expected to have found you in bed, madam." "I wished to rise, madam," replied the dauphiness, "to receive the honour your majesty does me." The king left them, as the dauphiness has no chair in his presence. The queen took her place, with the dauphiness on her right hand, Madame on her left, and there were three other chairs for the three young princes. They conversed together for upwards of half an hour; several duchesses were present, and the court was very numerous. At

* The countess de Fiesque, the constant friend of M. de Lauzun, and who often performed the part of mediatrix between him and Mademoiselle.

length she retired; the king gave orders to be informed of it, and handed her back to her carriage. I do not know how far the dauphiness went with her, but I shall hear. The king, upon his return, highly praised the queen; he said, "This is how a queen ought to be, both in person and mind, holding her court with dignity." He admired her courage in misfortunes, and her affection for her husband; for it is certain, that she loves him, as that hateful woman, madame de R****, told you. Some of our ladies, who wished to assume the airs of princesses, did not kiss the queen's robe, some of the duchesses wished to avoid it also; but the king was displeased at this, and they now pay her homage. Madame de Chaulnes has been informed of these particulars, but has not yet performed this duty. She left the marquis at Versailles, the young gentleman being very highly amused there; he has informed his uncle that he should go to-day to the ballet, at Trianon: the chevalier will send you his letter. He is there then upon his good behaviour, executing all the commissions his uncle has given him, to accustom him to exactness in accounts; what advantage will he not derive from this sort of education! I have received an answer from M. de Carcassonne; it is a curious performance, but it must be passed over in silence; you may assure yourself I shall reply to it properly; he has taken seriously, and quite misunderstood, my raillery. Ah, my child! I perfectly comprehend your tears, when you figure to yourself this little fellow at the head of his company, and think of all the good and ill fortune that may befall him in that situation! The abbé Têtu is constantly immersed in the gloom of the vapours. I have made known to madame de Coulanges all your kind expressions; she is always desirous of writing to you in my letter, but it never takes place.

The chevalier does not like concluding with professions of kindness; but without attending to him, I shall embrace you tenderly, and tell you that I love you with an affection, supported by the friendship you bear me, and proportionate to your merit; where is the harm of ending a letter thus, and saying what we constantly feel and constantly think?

Good day, count; you are both then of the same opinion as to your business and expense? would to God you had always been so! Good day, my darling Paulina; I cannot help laughing at you, for taking six weeks to consider what name you should give me, *grandmother* or *madam*; at length, however, you have decided for *madam*.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI.

SINCE you have had the blue ribbon, madam, I have found only this corner of a letter to tell you that I am highly pleased at it, and the more so, as madame de Cauvisson daily excites my pity upon this head; by dint of inspiring her with resignation, I have discovered the arduousness of my task, and consequently how agreeable it was, not to be able to dispense with me upon these occasions. Accept, then, madam, my homage, and give me credit for saying, that never was *misanthropic* philosopher less so than I am in this respect; so much has joy unhinged me. By the bye, the sect of misanthropists derived its existence from the fire-side of the chevalier, who is the president, and does me the honour of admitting me into this dignified profession. I shall acquaint you with its progress, as soon as it becomes amusing in the history which I have begun. Do me the favour to inform the count de Grignan of my sentiments with respect to the knighthood.

I forgot to tell you, that the title of my book is *Misanthropism*; but your mother maintains, that it should be *Misanthropy*: oblige me with the decision of this knotty point, and you shall have the first copy.

LETTER DCCCXLII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 19, 1689.

This is the Wednesday so expressly forbidden by my dear countess; but she cannot understand that it is a relief to me to talk to her. I often look at your dear picture, and assure you, I begin too soon and too fondly to wish to see and embrace you, and to hear the sound of your voice; my heart is full of these desires, and these sentiments, and your picture encourages, without gratifying, them. Madame de Chaulnes was delighted with it the other day, and praised it so highly, and in so loud a tone, that you might almost have heard her, though you are at such a distance; for I know where you are, and this knowledge, in some degree, fixes my imagination, as I am sure to find you at a certain spot; but we are no longer neighbours. I am astonished that madame de Langlée should be in Provence, and not with her family *: it appears to me that you are not pleased with the dinner you gave her, but her delicacy is beyond all gratification.

I find the chevalier's good sense points out to him the impropriety of going to Avignon, and incurring ex-

* Langlée, of whom mention has been made by madame de Sévigné in several of her letters, had acquired a large fortune by gaming. He was very ostentatious, and very vain. Under the name of Crviander, La Bruyere describes him as his wife is here represented, blushing at the meanness of his family.

penses there. You have blazed away in Provence for these twenty years; you should now, therefore, yield to the exigencies of your son, and retrench without delay: prudence directs this; this motive, which it is honourable to assign, will easily be understood; it will not seem a mere pretence, after so many proofs of your hospitality and magnificence. We must not attempt impossibilities; this truth has not, I am afraid, yet found a place in M. de Grignan's mind; but, judging of the future by the past, he concludes that things will always go on in their old track: this is a vain and delusive hope. The chevalier and I have reasoned much upon this. Give up the idea of a reconciliation with the pope, and draw from Avignon all that the king allows you; but consider it as a blessing from Heaven to support your son, and not to be wasted in splendour; for if you have not the courage to retrench, as you have resolved to do, this succour of Providence will be useless to you. Such, my dear child, is the advice of a mother, whose love is as durable as it is affectionate.

We expect your son, who is to return to-night from Versailles; he set out a week ago with our duchess de Chaulnes. I long to know how he has amused himself there, and what sort of society he has found: we strongly recommended to him to avoid bad company; we are convinced that he does better when alone, than when he thinks he is observed by any one: I shall know how he has conducted himself by M. de la Fayette, who takes great interest in him.

M. d'Avaux * came to see me the day before yesterday; my letter was already sealed: he spoke highly in your praise, loving and honouring you as much as when at Livri. He asked me whether you had received

* Anthony de Mesmes, count d'Avaux, prevôt and master of the ceremonies of the king's orders of knighthood.

your blue ribbon; I told him you had not received it on the tenth; the rest, he said, had theirs, and as many things were neglected, he would endeavour there should be no farther delay. He added, that he should be delighted to give you an account of his success, and to avail himself of the opportunity to pay his compliments to you. I am very glad he has taken upon himself this business; if it be useless, so much the better; and if not useless, so much the better still.

Madame de Chaulnes took me yesterday to the wedding of madame de la Ferté, at the request of madame de Mirepoix *, who, however, was not there; it seems a misunderstanding had already taken place, and they were quarrelling again in the evening, because the ready money was not arrived. I saw the husband, and the bride of twelve years old, so little proportioned to the Ethiopian king. This marriage is so much condemned, that I believe the mother will never make her appearance here again. The duchess de la Ferté will be a burthen to them; and upon this she calculated. She says, her own property is exhausted; that she has only an income of 10,000 livres; that she was in want of a son-in-law, and that to her son-in-law she is wedded: this is her constant discourse. As she rents a large house in the street St. Croix, she says, that when she is at Versailles, they are to be economists; this economy is to consist of *bouillée* for the little wife. They are sometimes to dine with madame de la Mothe, but this is not an establishment. These circumstances plainly show what will be the felicity of this alliance.

We paid a visit yesterday to the marchioness de Coislin, who has lost her mother, the aged d'Alègre. We also called on mademoiselle de Grignan's friend:

* Madame de Mirepoix, Madeleine du Pui-du-Fou, sister of M. de Grignan's second wife.

what a cruel fashion, to visit the afflicted so soon! We then waited upon Mademoiselle, who scolded me for not having been to see her before. I do not like to interfere with her petulances. Adieu, my dear child; do not increase your troubles; increase only your courage and good resolutions.

Seven o'clock in the evening.

Your letter is come. The severe weather which has frozen the Rhone and the Durance, has converted the Seine into a mirror: it has benumbed our limbs, and so spoiled our streets, that I have not been out for a week, except with madame de Chaulnes, at the expense of her horses; mine were not able to support it, so I did not offer them. I was often, during this time, in the apartment of the chevalier, who is now pretty well, and intends going to Versailles, after the journey to Marli; but this must be said in the lowest whisper, for, should the gout overhear us, it might prevent the execution of the plan. The weather, which is a little milder to-day, has retarded our letters twenty-four hours.

The archbishop (of Aix) has very high notions; but the more testy he is, the closer you should keep to him, like a horse that is restiff: but, above all things, bear no malice in your heart. I perfectly comprehend how impossible it is, not to entertain three or four people occasionally, as you do; this is the only way to please them all, and you confer as many favours at a less expense. The chevalier, when melancholy, is too rigid and severe; if he were there, I am sure he would act as you do. Remember me to madame de Langlée, since she has not forgotten me: it is true, that I very much admired the taste of her dress. I am more satis-

fied than I was, as M. d'Avaux thinks of your ribbon; it appeared as if you had been forgotten.

Madame de Maintenon is going to make her young ladies perform Esther. It was very pretty of you to read my account of the installation in public. You do just what you please with me and my letters. Adieu, my beloved child; I am as you left me, except that, instead of having the happiness of seeing you every day in this house, I often sigh deeply at finding you here no longer. I very much doubted whether you would be of our opinion respecting your brother.

LETTER DCCCXLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, January 21, 1689.

The courier is not yet arrived, and I must return to your last letter to fill this. I never experienced friendship so tender, so firm, or so agreeable, as yours for me. I sometimes reflect how much this state, which I now enjoy, has been the sole and affectionate object of my ambition. You deserve to be beloved by your son, as I love you, and as you love him. He does not tell you all he feels; I scolded him for the simple account he gave you the day before yesterday. The chevalier showed him your letter; it ought to melt him with tenderness and gratitude: was there ever such a heart as yours, or such true maternal affection? Your prelates judged of the effect of their letters at a distance; but we form a better opinion here; the very shadow of the thing has been scouted *; be assured, the nephew has been

* She alludes to the office of commandant of the king's orders of knighthood, the reversion of which the archbishop of Arles, aged 86, had requested for his nephew the coadjutor.

thought sharp-set, and the uncle either governed or superannuated. In short, nothing could have been more ill-judged, or more ill-timed, than this business; may it, as it merits, be buried in oblivion: I am pleased with myself, for having always considered it in this light. M. d'Avaux informed me, that he thought your ribbon had been sent; a cold has prevented his going to Versailles; we shall know from him whether the courier has been drowned, or what has happened. He wonders that you have not asked for it, by a note to M. de Chateauneuf; but I neither dared to undertake or propose it.

Your son is busy with preparations for a masquerade on Sunday at the Palais Royal; the duke de Chartres has invited him: madame d'Escars has been giving her advice, as well as mademoiselle de Meri; you know the importance of these great affairs. He is gone to madame de Bagnols' with Sanzei. It is said, that marshal d'Estrées is going to Brest; the pretext of the sea renders this intelligence bearable: he is to take a tour through Britany, as if it were the spring of the year, and he in the spring of his life; such journeys are very fatiguing. Inform me of Paulina's disposition; if she has not been properly educated, it is still in your power to make a good impression on the wax that is not yet hardened, but will take any form you please. I have seen M. de Barillon, who is grown very fat; he enquired for you: he met your son at M. de Louvois's; he was so struck with his little face, which he thought so fine and handsome, that he enquired who he was, and on being informed, he embraced him five or six times, for the sake of his name, which brought father, mother, and grandmother, to his remembrance. Adieu, my dear child; it is impossible for me to tell you how I love you.

LETTER DCCCXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, January 24, 1689.

Your river Durance has at length suffered our letters to pass; the frost must have been severe indeed, to have stopped the rapidity of its course. We have had very severe weather, very sharp frosts, and yet I have not caught cold. I have several times kept the chevalier's chamber; and, as madame de Coulanges says, no one has had reason to complain of the inclemency of the season but he; to speak plainly, it did not appear to me that he was displeased at my presence. It now thaws; but I am in such good health, that I dare not take medicine, because I cannot hope to be better, and such a precaution appears to me ingratitude to Providence. The chevalier is no longer afflicted with pain; but he dares not yet risk going to Versailles. I must tell you a speech of madame de Coulanges which made me laugh, and which I thought very witty. M. de Barillon is beside himself, at meeting all his old friends; he frequently visits madame de la Fayette and madame de Coulanges; he said, the other day, to the last, "Ah, madam, how agreeable your house is to me! I shall be very happy to visit you in the evenings, when tired of my family." "Sir," said she, "I shall expect you to-morrow." This turn was so quick, that we all joined in a general laugh.

Your son was last night at the duke de Chartres's ball; he was very handsome, and will inform you of his success. You must not, however, calculate upon his studying much; he owned to us yesterday, very

sincerely, that he is at present incapable of paying proper attention; his youth hurries him away, and he does not understand what he reads. We grieve that he has not, at least, a taste for reading, and that he wants inclination more than time. His frankness prevented our scolding him; I know not what we did not say to him; I mean the chevalier, myself, and Corbinelli, who was rather warm upon the occasion. But we must not fatigue or force him; this taste will come in time, my dear; for it is not possible, that, with so much spirit, good sense, and love for his profession, he should have no desire to be made acquainted with the exploits of the heroes of antiquity, and particularly *Cæsar at the head of his Commentaries**. Have patience, and do not fret: he would be too perfect were he fond of reading.

You astonish me by what you say of Paulina: pray, pray, my dear child, keep her with you; think not that a convent can repair the errors of education, whether as to religion, with which the sisterhood are very little acquainted, or as to any thing else. You will do much better at Grignan, when you have time for application. You will make her read good authors; even Abbadie † himself, as she has good sense; you will converse with her, and M. de la Garde will assist you: I am convinced that this is preferable to a convent.

As to peace with the pope, the abbé de Bigorré assures us that it is far from being concluded; that the holy father will give up nothing, and that it is generally believed, that M. de Lavardin and cardinal d'Estrées will return immediately; avail yourself, then, of the time which God, who extracts good from evil, has

* It is evident that this was a ridiculous blunder which escaped some well-known personage at that period.

† See a note respecting him in Letter 783.

given you *. The aged Sanguin is dead; she died like a heroine, walking about her chamber to the last moment, and looking in the glass to see Death in his natural colours. A compliment of condolence should be paid to M. de Senlis and M. de Livri, but not by letter, for they are already consoled: there is no one but you, my dear child, who refuses to comply with the order established since the creation of the world. By your description of mademoiselle d'Or, she appears to me very amiable; she might be secured, if her father were reasonable: but what madness to love no one but ourselves, to think ourselves every thing, to be devoid of the prudent, natural, and Christian-like thought of settling our children! You must be aware that I can scarcely comprehend this injustice. It is a happiness from which our self-love should derive gratification. I have written an answer to M. de Carcassonne †, which the chevalier greatly approved, and which he calls a master-piece. I have taken him in his own way, and, as I keep him at the distance of a hundred and fifty leagues from me, I say all I think: I tell him he should not estrange himself from his affairs; that he should make himself acquainted with them, calculate, compute, and regulate them; take his measures; know what can and what cannot be done; that such steps alone will enrich him; and that by pursuing them, nothing can prevent his compassing every thing, duties, pleasures, and the sentiments of his heart for a nephew whose resource he ought to be; that with regularity we may go a great way, and without it must fail in every thing: and then I am enthusiastic in my love for you,

* This circumstance gave rise to M. de Grignan's commanding for the king in Provence.

† The bishop de Carcassonne was a Grignan, a very good economist, but a sufficiently bad relation.

for M. de Grignan, for his son, for his family, for that name which he ought to support. I add, that I am inseparably attached to all these, and that my greatest grief is, that I can do nothing more for you; but that I give this charge to him, and pray to God to communicate all my sentiments to his heart, in order to increase those he has already: in short, my child, the letter is well arranged, though written hastily. The chevalier's eyes were red with reading it; and, for my own part, I pierced myself so deeply with my own sword, that I wept heartily. The chevalier told me, there was nothing to be done but to send it, which I accordingly did.

You describe your pedant so humorously, that he reminds me of the doctor in the comedy, who wants to be always talking. If you had time, I think you might take advantage of his library; as it is well chosen and well stored, you might select what you pleased; but, alas! my child, you have not time to avail yourself of the beauty and extent of your understanding; you make use of nothing but what is good and substantial: this is well; but it is a pity that every part is not employed; I think M. Descartes will be a very considerable loser by this.

Marshal d'Estrées is going to Brest; this makes us fear he will have the command of the regular troops there, I think, however, that the governor will be, in some measure, countenanced, and that they will not seek to disgust him entirely. M. de Charôst is returned for an instant, to justify himself respecting a hundred things that M. de Lauzun has improperly said, with respect to the state of the place, and the reception he gave the queen*. He has shown every thing to be

* Lauzun, on his arrival at Calais, with the queen of England, wished at first to conceal from M. de Charôst, who was governor of the

the reverse of M. de Lauzun's representations. This does no honour to the complainant, whose good stars seem to be arrested in their course by the anger of Mademoiselle: he has neither apartments nor admittance; he is simply at Versailles.

We fear lest the subtlety of the archbishop (of Aix) should get the better of you; but I say No, and that no one weighs his words more than you, in things of consequence. Madame de Coulanges desires to be remembered in the most friendly manner to you; she is always talking of writing to you. Since I have been chatting with the chevalier, I have learned that you will not have your ribbon till after the meeting on the second of February, because your certificate of yourself was not received till after new year's day, such is the rule. The chevalier must have a good deal of news for you, as he has seen Dangeau, who is very intelligent. M. de Chaulnes will not be mortified on the score of marshal d'Estrées, who has nothing to do but with maritime affairs on the coasts.

place, the quality of the person he brought with him. Obliged, at length, to make it known, he pretended that the governor paid no respect to the queen. He wished to reserve for himself the advantage of giving the first information to the king of her arrival. M. de Charôst would not listen to him, and acted diametrically opposite to what he wished. Hence arose the resentment and designs of Lauzun, which are mentioned here.

LETTER DCCCXLV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, January 26, 1689.

Corbinelli has been delighted with your picture of the pedant, whom you have drawn to the life: you talk of painting; the one you have given us of this man, so brimfull of his own knowledge, who neither allows himself, nor any one else, to breathe, and who, by main force, engrosses the whole conversation,—my dear girl, *this is a Titian.* I supped the night before last with madame de Coulanges and the good duchesses *; Barillon was there; he drank your health with an air of enthusiasm as mademoiselle de Sévigné and madame de Grignan: his ten years' embassy has not spoiled him.

Madame d'Acigné came to see me yesterday; she informed me that M. de Richelieu was a Candlemas knight, as well as M. de Grignan and several others, whose certificates were not recived till after new year's day. Tilladet will be created a knight on that day, and others will be proposed to the chapter; your ribbon will be sent at the same time: this is the truth of the case, which we did not know before.

You are very uneasy about this poor chevalier, whose pains have entirely subsided; he was paying visits the whole of yesterday with his nephew: he took him to marshal de Lorges's, M. de Pomponne's, the marquis d'Huxelles'; and he thinks of going to Versailles: thus all your notions are confused and misplaced. Your son diverts himself highly; he looked very handsome in his masquerade dress. Sanzei and he agree very well to-

* De Chaulnes and du Lude.

gether; there seems to be no bickering, envy, or jealousy, between them: they pay no particular attention to the little girls; they merely play with them, like children. I cannot conceive what these boys are made of; they think of nothing but their equipages. Sanzei will set out on Monday for Poitou, to endeavour to raise money; he will go by way of Autri, and thence to his regiment of dragoons, which is twelve leagues from his estate: such is his destiny; he will immediately begin his campaign: God preserve these poor youths! Yours has every day the pleasure of hearing his company praised, that is, your company*. All that have seen him compliment him upon it. The chevalier can tell you, as well as I can, that M. de Lamoignon has no intention of marrying his daughter † so soon. Several weddings are spoken of; but they must be nearer to a conclusion before I can mention them to you.

Marshal d'Estrées is going to Brest, to have the command of maritime affairs, and the sea-coasts, with some troops. God preserve us from any broil that may render it necessary for him to take the sole command. We hope that such an offence will not be given to our governor, and that the employments will be divided, as Britany is sufficiently extensive. Perhaps the prince of Orange will not have time this year to turn his thoughts to France; he has occupation enough in England and Ireland, where they are inclined to take up arms for the king; our seas are all in motion; your Mediterranean alone is in a state of tranquillity. I

* This was a newly-raised company, which had been formed in the earldom of Grignan, and in some degree under the direction and through the means of madame de Grignan.

† Madeleine de Lamoignon, married in 1693 to Claude Longueil, marquis de Maisons, afterwards president à mortier in the parliament of Paris.

know not how far the extravagant vows of your women will prevail; I would fain add that they should eat no more oranges, but banish both the colour and the fruit: these whims should be exhibited upon our coasts. I am, however, truly of opinion, that the king and queen of England are better off at St. Germain, than in their perfidious kingdom. The king of England calls M. de Lauzun his governor; but he governs no one else, and is not much in favour. Their majesties have only accepted of what the king would have given them, fifty thousand livres a month, and will not live like sovereigns; many English are come over to them, or they would not have accepted so much; in short, they wish to pursue a plan that may last. They have reminded me of my dear romances; but a little intrigue is wanting. I finish your acknowledgements here, as I formerly finished your romances, and the friendship of your dogs. La Chau is upon the point of setting out: I send a little badge of the order of the Holy Ghost to M. de Grignan; I wish him to wear it, when the courier, who brings the ribbon, arrives. I entreat you, my dear count, to accept this trifling present; it is to make amends for the insult my daughter sometimes offers you, in mentioning me, instead of you. These are strange presents, a ribbon, a sash, a little dove, a shadow, a breath, a nothing; this is what we give, when we have nothing left to give: I have resigned all: I examined all the effects and consequences on one side only, and I remained firm, saying to myself, "Well, if I am slighted, or ruined, God may turn this ingratitude to my advantage, and render it the cause of my retreat from the world, and of my eternal salvation." Under this idea, I have not repented of any thing I have done: your friendship, and the disposition of your heart towards me, make my life too happy:

but you are sometimes too far from me, and I feel your absence painfully.

LETTER DCCCXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, January 28, 1689.

I AM delighted at the remote correspondence you carry on with this good governor *, who adores you, and gives me a thousand testimonies of his friendship upon every occasion. His wife is incessantly praising you, and thanking you for your remembrance; she entreats me to say a thousand kind things to you for her. She is gone to Versailles, where she will see the queen of England, and will tell me many things that I shall relate to you.

The *comedy* † or *tragedy* of Esther has already been performed at St. Cyr. The king thought it excellent. The prince shed tears. Racine never produced a finer or more affecting piece: Esther's prayer for Ahasuerus is enchanting. I was in pain to think that the part of the king should be represented by a little girl, but they say she does it very well. Madame de Caylus performs the character of Esther, and even surpasses Champmêlé; if this piece is printed, I will send it you immediately. We want the abbé Têtu to see it; he is, really, to be pitied; his disorder increases daily; opium has lost its power, and only serves to make him a little easy: this is a pitiable state, and yet he goes out. I told him of your concern for him, and he entreated me to make his grateful acknowledgements to you.

* The duke de Chaulnes, who was in his government in Britany.

† All theatrical pieces were, till then, comprised under the title of comedy.

The marriage of M. de Rouci* approaches, to my great astonishment, as there is to be no *tabouret*. Mademoiselle de la Marck is to marry M. de Brionne—another matter of astonishment, on account of the lady's age†, which is said to be upwards of thirty. It is whispered that M. de Mertain and mademoiselle d'Usez‡ are to come together; and M. de Crussol§ and mademoiselle de Ventadour‖; but I vouch for none of these reports.

I am now in the chevalier's apartment; he is in his chair stamping with his left foot. I ask him, "What news, sir? which of these reports is true?" he replies; "God is God, madam, that is all I know." I am very much inclined to tell you no more, and to take my leave of you with this truth.

M. de Charôst is here; he has completely justified himself, with regard to all that M. de Lauzun clandestinely said of him. He will be a knight at Candlemas. The king has sent old Courtebonne from Calais to Hesdin, which is the government of his son. He is replaced by Laubanei, a good officer, who is to be under the command of M. de Charôst, whose labours will be

* Francis de Roie de la Rochefoucauld, count de Rouci, married, 6th of February following, Catharine Frances d'Arpajon, daughter of the duke of that name, and of Catherine Henrietta d'Harcourt.

† This marriage did not take place. Madame de la Marck married, March 7 of the same year, James Henry de Durfort, duke de Duras.

‡ Louisa Catherine de Crussol d'Usez was not married till November 1691, and then to Louis Francis de Tellier, marquis de Barbisieux.

§ Louis, marquis de Crussol, afterwards duke d'Usez, died at Ulcheu, in 1693.

‖ Anne Génevieve de Levi was married on February 16, 1671, to Louis Charles de la Tour de Bouillon, prince de Turenne, who fell at Steinkirk in 1692, and to a second husband February 15, 1694, Hercules-Meriade de Rohan, duke de Rohan-Rohan.

very much diminished by the change; M. de Charôst will not return these two months. Every one has his afflictions: I am frequently in company, when it is said that the commandant of Provence alone is exempt from them, his situation being a pleasant and a noble one. It is a pity that it does not agree with every thing that is asserted here: let us, however, enjoy the distinction, and the peace and tranquillity that prevail no where else. I am as much astonished as you are, that your women should disguise themselves and make vows *: it is for ours to tremble, and not *game*. I never knew such misplaced fears. Adieu, my dear child; I do not tell you how much I love you, since you know it already.

Eight o'clock at night.

The hope of madame de Coulanges's writing to you, has been held out too long; it is time she should convince you, that she has something more than good intentions.

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES.

MADAME de Sévigné would never let me write to you, madam; she cannot comprehend how you can occupy my thoughts for a moment; I never met with so strange a woman. I nevertheless inform you, that if you have a desire to pay your court, you should ask to see Esther; you know what Esther means; all persons of sense are charmed with it, and you will be more charmed than any one. It is a mere trifle to come from Grignan to sleep at Versailles; I should be very happy to meet you there, for I do not believe any one

* These vows were, to wear white, violet, or drab colour, &c. not to frequent places of public amusement, and to abstain from play.

can long more ardently to see you than I do. I could not help giving you this advice, madam, knowing that if madame de Sévigné were left to herself, she would always forget you. I must not conclude this complimentary line without embracing M. de Grignan; it is a right to which I shall always lay claim; I will embrace him notwithstanding his Holy Ghost. Madam de Frontenac, and mademoiselle d'Outrelaise, desire me to say a great deal upon their account. The poor abbé Têtu has the vapours still; I do all I can to cure him, but without success. M. de Coulanges says he cannot have the honour of writing to you, because he has a pain in his foot; he fancies he has the gout, and cries out like a madman, and all this to imitate the chevalier de Grignan.

LETTER DCCCXLVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, January 31, 1689.

Yes, yes, I do indeed look like a person who has been alarmed at your sore throat; and I cannot tell you too, how freely this letter of the 24th, which informs me of your recovery, makes me breathe again: I am as happy therefore as absence will allow me to be; for I must acknowledge, that fancy is a cruel tormentor, and greatly insults our weakness at such a time. But preserve your health, if you love me, if you love us all, and wish us all to be well; my health seems entirely devoted to your pleasure, it is so regular and perfect. I am going, upon your assurance, into the chevalier's apartment; that dear little room that so naturally attracts me, which I have visited for more than ten years, and where I am still so well received. The chevalier will

very soon go to Versailles; he is well, which gives me great pleasure, though the tedious hours which I must endure in his absence, present me with a dreary prospect. We laugh together, we talk of you, and I am out of my element when he is not here. Your son has been a courtier these three days; the duke de Charôst, who is here, and has seen him, gave me yesterday a very good account of him.

Madame de Chaulnes has seen the queen of England, with whom she is greatly pleased; the little prince was dressed like a puppet; he is handsome and lively, and is continually dancing in his nurse's arms: these are the truly happy days of infancy. The histories which we read over again on account of this event, are replete with the perfidy of the people. The prince of Orange is not quite at his ease in London, there being three parties: that of the king and the bishops, which is very weak; that of the prince of Orange, which is very strong; and a third, consisting of republicans and non-conformists. All Ireland is in the interest of th . ; he would have done well to have escaped thither. not so much liked as the queen. He calls M. de his master; the master stands in great need himself. Mademoiselle triumphs. Marshal d'H is set out for Brest and the sea-coasts. The vigilance and services of M. de Chaulnes give great satisfaction; he is as active as a man of twenty-five.

I do not think that your journey to Avignon can ever take place at a better time; Lent is a favourable circumstance; the air is mild there, and, from the favourable light in which the pope views you, he will let you long enjoy this revenue. You should laugh at the news of the *place des precheurs**; the carrying off the

* This was a place of meeting every morning at Aix, where the most false and absurd reports were propagated.

princess of Orange, and the taking of her husband, are truly ludicrous; to these we may add the siege of Bois le Duc, which was only a jest. every thing as yet is calm; nothing but diversions are thought of. The king and the whole court are delighted with the tragedy of Esther. Madame de Miramion *, and eight Jesuits, among whom was father Gaillard, honoured it with their presence at the last representation: in short, it is Racine's master-piece; if I were a devotee, I should be ambitious to see this piece. The princess de Conti is still an advocate for the opera; this, they say, is because it breathes love, which is quite out of fashion.

M. de Charôst has had a charming conversation with the king; it seems that M. de Lauzun has endeavoured ineffectually to do him ill offices; this is no credit to Lauzun: the king knows that Charôst has always loved and served him as a friend. The reason of Courtebonne's removal from Calais is his great age, fearing it might prevent his being sufficiently vigilant. The king removes him to Hesdin, his son's government, and sends Laubanie, who is a good active officer, to Calais. M. de Charôst told the king he was very much pleased with these arrangements; that he would zealously unite with Laubanie, of whose knowledge and experience he should be glad to avail himself; and that the good of

* A lady famous for her piety, for the great number of her good works, and the foundations instituted by her.

It was on the subject of these representations that madame de Maintenon said, "Now we shall only play for the saints," thus seeking to salve her conscience, or perhaps prevent criticism.

Marie Bonneau, the widow of Jean Jacques de Beauharnois, lord of Miramion, here mentioned, had the honour of the conversion of madame de Montespan; an honour she had purchased by the great inconvenience of being long a witness to her fury, and the confidante of her disgrace.

the service should be the sole object of his pursuit. The king appeared highly pleased with this. M. de Charôst will return to Calais during Lent; in the mean time he will be created a knight, and will not oppose the proposition made to the chapter of M. de Grignan; after which the Holy Ghost will fly straight to you.

I know not what is become of all the marriages I told you of. M. de Mirepoix's becomes very gloomy. The duchess (de la Ferté) says, "I am quite exhausted, I can neither board nor lodge them." People say to her, "Why do you ruin yourself?" Madame de Mirepoix says, "I will take them and maintain them." The little girl cries; in short, I never saw a doll married, or so ridiculous a marriage as this. Yet was he not one of the best-bred men in France? My dear child, compare not your heart with that of any other person; God has given you a perfect one, thank him for it: your ill humour was a mere vapour, a mist before the sun; but the hearts of others are injured root and branch, so that you will never serve as an excuse for them.

LETTER DCCCXLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, February 2, 1689.

To-day, according to all appearances, you were admitted by the chapter with some other stragglers; and I doubt not that the messenger will set out to-morrow with your ribbon, as well as that of M. de Monaco. The birdlime, to which your dove's wing stuck, was this; your acts of faith and attestation of life and manners, did not come to hand till the very day on which the first chapter was held. You do too much honour to Marie de Rabutin-Chantal to take her part, and defend

her cause: but do you know, if Jeanne Fremiot* were not in heaven, she would scold you well. She was the daughter of two or three presidents. What, sir, do you take us for? and *Berbisi*, on her mother's side. When people have been engaged in lawsuits, they should be careful of what they say.

Do not fatigue yourself, my dear child, by writing long letters; you cannot doubt that they are agreeable to me, but then they destroy you: tell me only of the state of your health, of your affairs and your intentions; these things are, indeed, too dear to my heart to be passed over. Leave me to chat, but do not reply; refer me, with regard to certain particulars, to the chevalier; in short, I wish you to tell me of nothing but your health and your welfare. So the poor little *black owls*† frightened you? I thought they would, and could not help laughing to myself; you think they look melancholy: but they do not pout‡, nor have they the voice of a *Megæra;* and when you are acquainted with their abilities, you will find that, instead of being of ill omen, they give beauty to the headdress at least.

The queen of England seems more inclined, if it pleased God, to reign in the beautiful kingdom of England, where the court is numerous and splendid, than to be at St. Germain, though overwhelmed with the heroic bounties of our monarch. As to the king of England, he seems contented there, and it is for that reason he is there. I embrace my amiable countess, and the count, in honour of the festival; and for the

* Madame de Sévigné's grandmother, known to this day the Blessed Mother of Chantal.

† A fashionable hood of that time.

‡ See La Fontaine's fable of the Eagle and the Owl.

same reason I must take my leave, to go to vespers and the sermon. I am reading with pleasure the *Règles Chretiennes* * of M. le Tourneux; I only scanned them upon madame de Coulanges's table, they are now upon my own.

LETTER DCCCXLIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday morning, February 4, 1689.

I EXPECTED the chevalier and your son last night. I heard that a brevet to take your blue ribbon had been dispatched to you, and that the ribbon and cross, which the king had given you, would be sent to-day; now, then, I am happy. Take special care of this charming ribbon *ad multos annos*, adorn your fine figure with it, and do not forget it during the three hours which you set apart every day for love †; it is an ornament that should accompany the charms of this faithful passion; my daughter seems so well satisfied, that I may enter into this confidence. I find myself insensibly talking to you, my dear count, and I am compelled to embrace you, to close my discourse.

I now, my dear child, return to you. It appears to me very likely that the chevalier may stay to go to St. Cyr, where madame de Maintenon sends every one of profound wisdom: for instance, Racine mentioned M. de Pomponne to her, she and the king both gave an ex-

* Principes et Règles de la Vie Chretienne. Rules and Principles of a Christian Life, first printed in 1688.

† We know, and so do many other persons, that a gentleman at Paris was so infatuated with his blue ribbon, that he had one made of tin painted to wear in the bath upon his naked skin. It is probable that he took seriously what madame de Sévigné here recommends in jest.

clamation, and his majesty ordered him to go there. Accordingly the illustrious Pomponne went yesterday: I shall not finish my letter till I have seen him, and till the chevalier and your son are returned: thus, my dear child, do I toss about the ball. Madame de Chaulnes and I supped on Wednesday night on madame de Coulanges's pullet, in Coulanges's closet, who has the gout like a little debauchee; he roars, is carried on a man's back, sees company, suffers a great deal, and does not sleep; but all this is a mere jest, for he laughs even in the midst of it all.

I dined yesterday at madame de la Fayette's, with Treville and Corbinelli; we had some partridges from Auvergne, and some pullets from Caen; his son, who you know is the marquis's spy, told me he did very well, that he had a good manner, kept good company, frequented good tables, that he was much beloved, and by some was called in jest the *little tom-cat* *; while others who were more polite, on account of his youth, called him *Puss*. This seems to be all very well. The chevalier has sent me the same account; here is his letter: this whispered panegyric, which is so natural, will give you pleasure. You will not be displeased to know the difference between a good and a bad company. M. de Louvois said aloud the other day, to M. de Nogaret, "Sir, your company is in a very bad condition." "Sir," said he, "I did not know it." "You ought to know it," said M. de Louvois; "have you seen it?" "No, sir," said Nogaret. "You should have seen it, sir." "Sir, I will give orders respecting it." "Orders should have been given before: you must act consistently, sir; either declare yourself a courtier, or perform your duty as an officer." This

* Madame de Sévigné had formerly called her grandson *Puss*.

must be very grating to madame de Cauvisson*, she now sees the consequence of neglecting the service: and you should be very happy in the thought of the marquis's fine noble company, which is of your own creation; as also of his attention, as well as his journey to Chalons: this is a compensation for all your trouble and his. This dialogue I had from the chevalier; but as he tells me he does not send you such details, I thought I should amuse you by relating them.

Madame de la Fayette, who never sleeps, and who is in a bad state of health, sends you a thousand friendly remembrances. M. de Treville ensures your wit and beauty, by his peculiar admiration. Madame de Lavardin places in the first rank of her praises, your heroic fortitude in taking your departure at the same time your son took his for Philipsburg: in short, my dear child, your modesty would have been laid under some contribution.

M. de la Vieuville is dead. He is the first who has diminished the number of knights. Bensérade says, that there is no rearing any governors for M. de Chartres †.

Friday, two o'clock in the afternoon.

At this moment, my dear child, I see Poirier coming into the room with your blue ribbon. I enclose the chevalier's note, by which you will find that the gentlemen are not tired of Versailles; that the chevalier is

* Mother of M. de Nogaret.

† Charles duke de la Vieuville, who died February 2, 1689, was appointed February 28, 1686, governor to Philip, duke de Chartres, afterwards duke of Orleans, and regent. He succeeded Godfrey, count d'Estrades, marshal of France, who, after being appointed governor to this prince in 1685, died February 26, 1686; so that the duke de Chartres lost two of his governors in less than four years.

delighted and in raptures with Esther; and that he thinks it proper to send you your ribbon by the post, in the same manner as M. de Monaco's is sent. I shall go presently to M. Orceau's, to recommend to him the care of my little box. The chevalier has performed his duty well at Versailles, and I am now going to perform mine, which leaves me only the honour of telling you, that *I have done no harm* in transmitting you this fortunate ribbon. Put it on speedily without ceremony; when you are an installed knight, you will do as the rest do. I embrace you, my dear child, with all my heart; you do not doubt it.

LETTER DCCCL.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, February 7, 1689.

Good day, count; are you dressed? do you look well? I think the blue ribbon becomes you admirably. I give you joy, and embrace you with this new ornament.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I went on Friday, after having sealed my letter, to M. de Pomponne's; he was returned from St. Cyr. Madame de Vins must have informed you, that madame de Maintenon mentioned him, and that he received the king's orders to attend the tragedy the next day. The king told him in the morning, that he was a very good judge of such things, and that he would doubtless be pleased. M. de Pomponne was highly so. Racine has outdone himself; he loves God as he loved his mistresses; he is the same as to sacred, as he was as to profane things; the holy Scriptures are strictly followed in this piece, every thing is fine, every thing is grand,

every thing is treated with dignity. You have seen what the chevalier wrote to me; his praises and tears are agreeable. The king and queen of England were at the representation of it on Saturday; would to God, my dear child, I could have been present also!

Your letter has given me great pleasure, and answers very well to all the articles in mine; but, my child, it is too long, though it be written with evident facility and swiftness. I cannot help feeling some anxiety at the number of letters you write, and at your long stay in your closet, from which you retire with a great pain in your back, a great pain in your head, and greatly exhausted; so that the pleasure I receive in reading your letters is always blended with sorrow, like every thing else in life. For instance, Avignon, which I do not mention for the reasons you have given, is nevertheless a good place, and comes very seasonably for your child; this is a paternal providence, for which we should thank God; while, on the other hand, the wind, the tempests, the hurricanes, the devils let loose, which have almost carried away your castle, have occasioned an unexpected expence of a thousand crowns. Why did not these demons carry away the uncouth building of Carcassonne where the coadjutor was?—Ah! my dear child, what havock! what universal alarm! what general perturbation! you paint this horrible scene like Virgil; but there was no one present to say *quos ego*— This tempest has been spoken of here. The bishop of Languedoc writes to Coulanges, that he was under great apprehension for the castle of Grignan. God defend you from ever passing a winter there, whilst there remains any other place or city in France.

I cannot help saying a word or two more of this marriage*, which becomes every day more ridiculous.

* See the Letters of January 10, 19, and 31.

The mother leaves them because she says she is ruined. I think what the duke de la Ferté says is very good, and that he is in the right; the wisdom and pride of M. de Mirepoix need not frighten him, for he is his son-in-law. At length the marriage of madame de Coislin with M. d'Henrichemont seems nearly concluded; they have sent to Rome, which is something. Mademoiselle d'Arpajon is betrothed to-day at Versailles to the count de Rouci: it is reported that he said to her: "Ugly as you are, mademoiselle, I cannot help loving you." None of the other matches I mentioned to you are certain. I expect our courtiers to-morrow. It is to be hoped that your son will some time or other be fond of reading: if it were not for this hope, I should be sadly grieved; his youthful frolics entirely engage him, and take up all his time.

You mention Britany, and set forth all the reasons that should induce me to go there. It is true, that M. de Chaulnes writes to me incessantly to entreat me to accompany madame de Chaulnes, who will set out this Lent with two carriages; he promises to complete all my business for me, and to bring me back after the states adjourn; so that I can never have a better opportunity. Madame de Chaulnes is not wanting in solicitations on her side, as you may suppose. I have, besides, a real occasion to finish in that country two or three little affairs with the abbé Charier, who desires me not to lose the opportunity of his stay in Britany, which will not be long after the rising of the states; he will then go to Lyons, and offers to accompany me to Grignan. Such, my dear child, is my situation; put yourself in my place, reflect on the circumstances and opportunities that offer, and give me your opinion; for I will be governed by you, and I entreat you to believe, that after this necessary journey for my business, I shall

be as much at your service, as my heart and inclination prompt me to be.

Paulina then is not perfect; I could never have supposed that her chief imperfection would have been, ignorance of religion. You must instruct her in this, which you are very capable of doing; it is your duty, and you have good books to assist you: in return, your sister-in-law, the abbess, will teach her the world. Your opinion of M. de Lauzun must be raised, the king has admitted him again to court; this is a thing which surprises every body, and enrages the princess. He had said that Calais was in a very bad condition, and that the governor had given a very ill reception to the queen: M. de Charôst has proved both assertions to be false. I saw Corbinelli at madame de Coulanges's: he has got Molinos * in his head. Adieu, my dear child: I am yours, more than I can express.

* A Spanish priest, author of a new mystical doctrine, known by the name of Quietism. See Letter 781.

END OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

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